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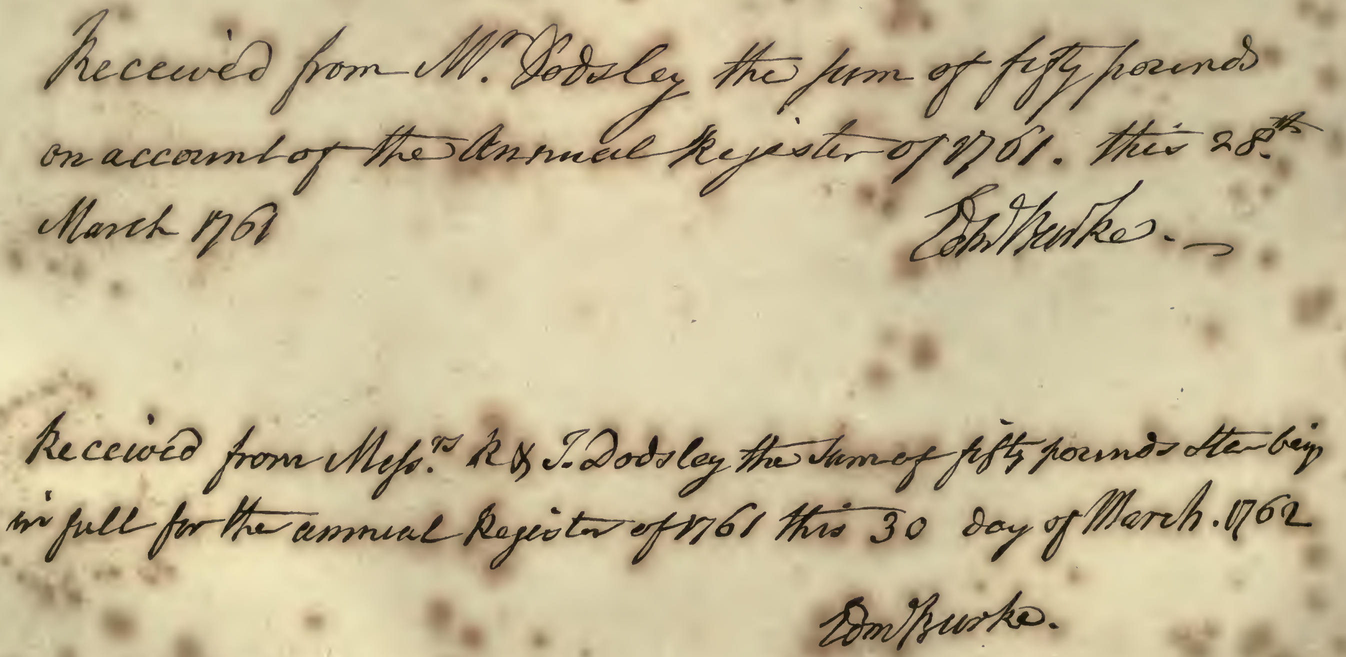

Receiv'd from Mr. Dodsley the sum of fifty pounds
on account of the Annual Register of 1761. this 28th
March 1762

Edm Burke.

Received from Messrs R & J. Dodsley the Sum of fifty pounds other being
in full for the annual Register of 1761 this 30 day of March. 1762

Edm Burke.

MEMOIR

OF THE LIFE AND CHARACTER

OF THE

RIGHT HON. EDMUND BURKE;

WITH SPECIMENS OF HIS POETRY AND LETTERS,

AND AN

ESTIMATE OF HIS GENIUS AND TALENTS,

COMPARED WITH THOSE OF HIS

GREAT CONTEMPORARIES.

BY JAMES PRIOR, ESQ.

SECOND EDITION,

ENLARGED TO TWO VOLUMES,

BY A VARIETY OF ORIGINAL LETTERS, ANECDOTES, PAPERS,
AND OTHER ADDITIONAL MATTER.

VOL. II.

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DURING the period of the application to Parliament of His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales for an increase of income in order to the liquidation of his debts, Mr. Sheridan, who was then supposed to stand high in the confidence of the illustrious personage, was commenting in strong terms, when dining one day at the table of Mr. Crewe, on the hardship of the case, and the disinclination shown by the executive government to assist him; concluding with a kind of authoritative assertion, that if not granted, His Royal Highness *must* discontinue the necessary repairs of Carlton House, and *must* retire from the dignity of his public station into the obscurity of private life.

Mr. Burke, who with several other members of Opposition was present, observed in reply, that though no one could wish more heartily than himself that no obstacle should be thrown by Mr. Pitt in the way of an amicable accommodation, yet even were the application refused, he saw no perfectly satisfactory reason for adopting the threatened alternative. "Admitting," said he, "that some inconveniences may be occasioned to His Royal Highness, yet on the whole it will be more wise to submit to them than to resort to retirement, which I consider extremely impolitic and ill-judged, and may induce people to believe that there is in such a mode of proceeding more of petulance than prudence; while many will be induced to question whether dignity thus easily and voluntarily thrown aside, may not in time be dispensed with altogether. Besides, *submission* is in itself a virtue, and ultimately will have its effect."

Considerable discussion ensued upon the point. It was urged that it was better not to appear in public at all, than to appear with diminished splendour; and at any rate the expenses of the public establishment alone would absorb the whole of his Royal Highness's income, leaving nothing for those private enjoyments which royalty as well as private men, look to as the chief soothers and sweeteners of life. "Taking the question even on this showing," replied Burke, "if we inquire very minutely, something may be found even for this purpose. But I must continue to think, that a Royal Personage ought, in some cases, to make this among his other sacrifices. My idea is, Sir, (alluding to the paramount duty of supporting the royal dignity in preference to any private gratification)—that we should *starve the man* in order to *fatten the prince*, rather than starve the prince in order to fatten the man."

"But after all, he continued, there will be no necessity for this now; I think I can make it out very satisfactorily; let us trace the outline on paper." Paper was accordingly brought. "To a palace, three things are indispensable—a chapel, a library, and a riding house, to provide for the wants of religion, of the understanding at large, and of the health of the body, but our views being economical, the chaplain must likewise perform the duty of librarian. Another point I deem essentially proper, if not politically useful, that is for His Royal Highness to give a dinner once a fortnight to all the leading members of both houses of parliament without distinction of party." He went on to state his ideas of a royal establishment on many other matters connected with public display; continuing the detail to the description and quality of the officers of the household, the number of servants, of horses, of carriages, (he limited the latter to two as sufficient for all useful purposes) the necessary annual repairs of the royal residence, proceeding through every other item of probable expense down to the most minute, showing an extraordinary acquaintance with the customary wants of a palace though so little acquainted practically with its interior—a knowledge probably acquired from the minute research necessary to perfect the details of the economical reform bill. The result of his calculation was, that after paying all state expenses, upon a scale which the company present seemed to think sufficiently liberal, there would still be a residue of 10,000*l.*, which might be appropriated to private purposes. " I always knew Burke's capacity to comprehend great things," said Mr. Courtenay, who was present on the occasion, " but I was not so well aware that he had leisure enough to master the small."

Of his desire to encourage and assist unfriended talent, or any thing that bore the semblance of talent, another instance, which occurred about this time, ought not to be omitted.

Travelling from town toward Beaconsfield during the summer, he overtook on the road a person almost overcome with heat and fatigue, and whose habiliments having evidently seen more than their due period of service, tacitly hinted that their owner found it inconvenient to provide any other conveyance than that which nature had given him. Mr. Burke believing he saw something of character in his countenance, offered him (no uncommon thing with him to occasional travellers of not absolutely disreputable appearance) a ride in his carriage as far as their way lay together, which was, of course, gratefully accepted. The pedestrian proved to be a poor artist,—or rather what is termed a *piece* of an artist; for having been brought up to something else, he had but lately intruded into the regions of taste, and had met with from the world the usual fate of all intruders, a cool reception. Specimens of his abilities probably meant to "shame the rogues" for their defect in judgment, he carried with him. These the orator examined; and finding some germ of talent that might in time become respectable though not at all likely to be great, he carried him to Beaconsfield, kept him for a day or two, and dismissed him with a little money and much good advice, "to study hard and work diligently, for those alone constituted the foundations of all excellence and all success."

The man, however, having too good an opinion of himself to believe that so much work was necessary, or perhaps conceiving how much easier it was to live by the liberality of a patron than by his own plodding industry, became troublesome in his applications for pecuniary assistance. This, Mr. Burke plainly told him, it was not in his power to give to any extent; but if determined to be industrious, he would by his influence among the chief artists in the country, take care to ensure him constant employment. He also wrote him two letters of advice—one of them the writer is informed very excellent—for though promised to him, he has not yet seen it; the other is transcribed from the original now before him.

"Sir,

"I have received your letters, and if I have given you offence by not answering your first in proper time, I am sorry for it, and beg your pardon.

"You will be so obliging to recollect that the most I ever gave you the least hope of was some occasional assistance whilst you perfected yourself in drawing at such hours as you could spare from your business; as you showed me some essays in engraving by which it appeared to me (though it was too late to think of painting) you might possibly by application obtain a livelihood, or some help towards it by that art, which is lately come into very great request. More than that I could not honestly give you the least hope of; and this, I think, I repeated to you more than once. When I come to town, I shall, so far as such a trifling aid as I can afford, give you a little help.

"As to your arrangements in other respects I am not at all entitled, and feel as little disposed, to abridge your liberty by any direction of mine. It is not my custom to take upon me the regulation of any person's conduct, even of those who are better known to me than you are. It is impossible that I should have any objection to your application to the gentleman you mention, who is a man of undoubted merit; and one for whom I have much esteem.

"As to what you write about other matters I must beg leave to suggest to you that if you can reconcile it to your own mind to have any meddling with prophecies and prophets,* it were more advisable to keep such thoughts to yourself; as to those who are not used to make the allowances I am disposed to make for the singularities of men, it must tend to give them very disadvantageous impressions of you. I am with good wishes for your success,

"Sir, your most humble servant,

"EDMUND BURKE."

"Beaconsfield, Sept. 9, 1787."

Toward the end of October, 1788, the melancholy illness of the King withdrew public attention from all other subjects to the consequent proceedings in Parliament, in which Mr. Burke, who, it might be thought, had enough to do with the complicated labours of the impeachment, was destined to take an equally conspicuous part.

It is more than doubtful whether, at the commencement of the business, this was quite congenial to his wishes. But the absence from England at first, and the subsequent illness of Mr. Fox, threw the labouring oar upon him; and a sense of party honour or necessity, joined to a conviction in his mind of the Heir Apparent being treated with injustice and disrespect by the Ministry, carried him forward to wield it with as much of energy as he had ever shown upon any occasion, but with less moderation of temper. Personal favour or aggrandizement he had no reason to expect; for above nine weeks of the emergency had elapsed when he pointedly declared in the House of Commons (22d December)—and the omission was then well known in the political world, though remedied soon afterward,—that he knew as little of the interior of Carlton House as he did of Buckingham House. This did not in the least abate the zeal of his exertions.

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* Alluding to an inclination of the artist to become a follower of the prophet Brothers.

A minute detail of these labours, as they may be found in all publications whether of biography or history connected with this period, it is not necessary to give here; it is sufficient to say they comprised nearly all that argument, wit, constitutional knowledge, and sarcastic ridicule, could urge, and were zealously continued in almost every debate on the subject for about two months. He contended for the *exclusive* right of the Prince of Wales to the Regency, in opposition to Mr. Pitt, who maintained that any other person approved by Parliament, had an equal right to it; he strenuously resisted the two chief resolutions moved by him,—that it was the express duty of the two Houses to provide a Regency, in case of interruption to the royal authority

—and that they alone should determine on the means to give the royal assent to the bill constituting such a Regency.

From the following note written about this time to Sheridan, we might almost imply, that he did not *really* think some part of the argument of Mr. Fox and himself on this subject quite so strong and decisive as they wished to impress upon the public mind.

"My dear Sir,

"My idea was, that on Fox's declaring that the precedents, neither individually nor collectively, do at all apply, our attendance ought to have been merely formal. But as you think otherwise, I shall certainly be at the committee soon after one. I rather think that they will not attempt to garble: because, supposing the precedents to apply, *the major part are certainly in their favour*. It is not likely that they mean to suppress,—but it is good to be on our guard.

"Ever most truly yours, &c.

"Edmund Burke."

Gerard-street, Thursday Morning.

The bill itself, introduced as it was with so many restrictions, he stigmatized as derogatory, injurious, suspicious, and insulting to the Prince, who was thus left to exercise all the invidious duties of government without any of its power to encourage or reward merit; he therefore debated it, clause by clause, with unabated spirit till toward the end of February, when the happy recovery of the Sovereign, at length put an end to the bickerings and personalities on all sides produced by this contention. The usual and indeed uncommon diligence with which Mr. Burke sought for information on all topics of interest, may be conceived from what took place on the present occasion ; when it is known, that, besides ransacking our history for precedents or points of coincidence, he examined all the medical books treating of the disease, and visited several receptacles for persons so afflicted, in order more thoroughly to trace its general progress and results, besides being in constant attendance on the examinations of the physicians. Neither was his pen less exercised upon this occasion than any other of his powers ; and credit has been given to it for a variety of short pieces published in the newspapers of the day, such as the questions to the Lord Mayor, some speeches, letters, answers, and representations said to be written for exalted personages, a few of which breathe strong insinuations against the character and designs of Administration.

These however were inferior missiles compared with another production, which, from the quarter whence it nominally emanated, the important political sentiments it contained, the style in which they were conveyed, and the celebrity which the paper not only acquired at the moment, but has ever since retained, claimed an importance which it was suspected could only be given to it by the same gifted penman.

On the 30th December, 1788, Mr. Pitt addressed a letter to His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, specifying in detail the restrictions to be imposed upon him in the exercise of his duty as Regent. The reply, which, as a matter of course, would meet the public eye, required in its composition no ordinary share of skill, discretion, and sound constitutional feeling as well as knowledge; for while it was unavoidable for the Prince to express some displeasure at the ungenerous suspicions insinuated against his future conduct, considerable reserve became necessary even in touching upon this and upon every other part of the question, so as not to commit himself or his political friends, with Parliament, with the public, with the Queen, or with his Majesty, in case of his recovery. For the execution of this delicate duty the eyes of the party directly turned upon Burke. In his hands, while it would be sure to acquire the requisite vigour, information, and address necessary for the occasion; the heat which occasionally attended him in debate, was known to be almost wholly discarded from his compositions in the closet. This paper, though little time was given him for deliberating on the matter, fully confirmed their anticipations; indeed it is almost surprising how readily and completely he quits at a moment's notice the warmth of the partizan for the imposing dignity of the Prince. This peculiarity combined perhaps with the known fact so recently proclaimed by himself of being little familiar with the interior of Carlton House, have frequently given birth to doubts whether he was really the author of the piece; but of this fact there is no question: a few trifling alterations indeed, said to be made in his draught of it, were emphatically pronounced at the time to be *not for the better*.

"The Prince of Wales learns from Mr. Pitt's letter, that the proceedings in Parliament are now in a train which enables Mr. Pitt, according to the intimation in his former letter, to communicate to the Prince the outlines of the plan which His Majesty's confidential servants conceive to be proper to be proposed in the present circumstances.

"Concerning the steps already taken by Mr. Pitt, the Prince is silent. Nothing done by the two Houses of Parliament can be a proper subject of his animadversion; but when, previously to any discussion in Parliament, the outlines of a scheme of government are sent for his consideration, in which it is proposed that he shall be personally and principally concerned, and by which the royal authority and the public welfare may be deeply affected, the Prince would be unjustifiable, were he to withhold an explicit declaration of his sentiments. His silence might be construed into a previous approbation of a plan, the accomplishment of which every motive of duty to his father and sovereign, as well as of regard for the public interest, obliges him to consider as injurious to both.

"In the state of deep distress in which the Prince and the whole royal family were involved by the heavy calamity which has fallen upon the King, and at a moment when government, deprived of its chief energy and support, seemed peculiarly to need the cordial and united aid of all descriptions of good subjects, it was not expected by the Prince, that a plan should be offered to his consideration, by which government was to be rendered difficult, if not impracticable, in the hands of any person intended to represent the King, much less in the hands of his eldest son, the Heir Apparent of his kingdoms, and the person most bound to the maintenance of His Majesty's just prerogatives and authority, as well as most interested in the happiness, the prosperity, and the glory of the people.

"The Prince forbears to remark on the several parts of the sketch of the plan laid before him. He apprehends it must have been formed with sufficient deliberation, to preclude the probability of any argument of his producing an alteration of sentiment in the projectors of it. But he trusts with confidence to the wisdom and justice of Parliament, when the whole of this subject, and the circumstances connected with it, shall come under their deliberation.

"He observes, therefore, only generally on the heads communicated by Mr. Pitt; and it is with deep regret the Prince makes the observation, that he sees in the contents of that paper, a project for producing weakness, disorder, and insecurity, in every branch of the administration of affairs,—a project for dividing the royal family from each other—for separating the court from the state; and, therefore, by disjoining government from its natural and accustomed support, a scheme for disconnecting the authority to command service from the power of animating it by reward—and for allotting to the Prince all the invidious duties of government, without the means of softening them to the public by any one act of grace, favor, or benignity.

"The Prince's feelings, on contemplating this plan, are also rendered still more painful to him, by observing that it is not founded on any general principle, but is calculated to infuse jealousies and suspicions, wholly groundless he trusts, in that quarter whose confidence it will ever be the first pride of his life to merit and obtain.

"With regard to the motive and object of the limitations and restrictions proposed, the Prince can have but little to observe. No light or information is offered him by His Majesty's Ministers on these points. They have informed him what the powers are which they mean to refuse him, not why they are withheld.

"The Prince, however, holding, as he does, that it is an undoubted and fundamental principle of this constitution, that the powers and prerogatives of the crown are vested there as a trust for the benefit of the people, and that they are sacred only as they are necessary to the preservation of that poise and balance of the constitution, which experience has proved to be the true security of the liberty of the subject, must be allowed to observe, that the plea of public utility ought to be strong, manifest, and urgent, which calls for the extinction or suspension of any one of those essential rights in the supreme power or its representative; or which can justify the Prince in consenting, that in his person an experiment shall be made to ascertain with how small a portion of the kingly power the executive government of this country may be carried on.

"The Prince has only to add, that if security for His Majesty's re-possessing his rightful government, whenever it shall please Providence, in bounty to the country, to remove the calamity with which he is afflicted, be any part of the object of this plan, the Prince has only to be convinced that any measure is necessary, or even conducive to that end, to be the first to urge it, as the preliminary and paramount consideration of any settlement in which he would consent to share.

" If attention to what is presumed might be His Majesty's feelings and wishes on the happy day of his recovery be the object, it is with the truest sincerity the Prince expresses his firm conviction, that no event would be more repugnant to the feelings of his royal father, than the knowledge that the government of his son and representative had exhibited the sovereign power in a state of degradation, of curtailed authority, and diminished energy—a state hurtful, in practice, to the prosperity and good government of his people, and injurious, in its precedent, to the security of the monarch, and the rights of his family.

" Upon that part of the plan which regards the King's real and personal property, the Prince feels himself compelled to remark, that it was not necessary for Mr. Pitt, nor proper to suggest to the Prince, the restraint he proposes against the Prince's granting away the King's real and personal property. The Prince does not conceive, that during the King's life he is by law entitled to make any such grant; and he is sure that he has never shown the smallest inclination to possess any such power. But it remains with Mr. Pitt to consider the eventual interests of the royal family, and to provide a proper and natural security against the mismanagement of them by others.

" The Prince has discharged an indispensable duty, in thus giving his free opinion on the plan submitted to his consideration. His conviction of the evils which may arise to the King's interests, to the peace and happiness of the royal family, and to the safety and welfare of the nation, from the government of the country remaining longer in its present maimed and debilitated state, outweighs, in the Prince's mind, every other consideration, and will determine him to undertake the painful trust imposed upon him by the present melancholy necessity, which, of all the King's subjects, he deplores the most, in full confidence that the affection and loyalty to the King, the experienced attachment to the House of Brunswick, and the generosity which has always distinguished this nation, will carry him through the many difficulties inseparable from this most critical situation, with comfort to himself, with honour to the King, and with advantage to the public.

"Carlton House, January 2d, 1789."

The jealousy and displeasure contrived to be instilled into the mind of the Queen toward her son, without reasonable grounds for such feelings, were not among the least remarkable proofs of the sinister art and insinuation exerted upon this occasion. Of some of his Royal Highness's presumed friends and advisers, particularly the heads of opposition, still worse opinions were formed. Mr. Burke about this time used to say that some pains had been more than once taken, though without any provocation on his part, to cause him to stand ill with her Majesty; in the first instance on occasion of the economical reform bill; in the second by the impeachment of Hastings, whom she thought favourably of and was believed to patronise and support; in the third by the parliamentary proceedings on the present question. An instance of the paltry, though perhaps not unsuccessful arts, made use of on the former occasion to his disadvantage, came to his knowledge soon after it occurred, and was several times mentioned in conversation with his familiar friends, as an exemplification of a strong phrase of his own, for which he had been sometimes jocularly taken to task for using, "the low pimping politics of a court." Her Majesty, it seems, had been accustomed to use a lemon every morning for purposes of the toilet, but immediately after the passing of the reform bill in 1782, found regularly half a lemon substituted for a whole one. Upon inquiring into the cause, she was informed it arose from the operation of Mr. Burke's bill, which under the plea of economy, was intended to diminish, or to deprive her, and those about her, of all their little comforts and conveniencies—"and however contemptible the shafts," said he, "levelled in this and other similar methods, I found they were not without their venom."

In the vehement abuse poured out upon him during the discussions on the Regency, it has been said that he displayed a kind of triumph, or at least an indelicacy to the unhappy condition in which His Majesty was placed; a charge which his general and indeed extreme humanity upon all occasions, and a fair interpretation of his expressions such as every extempore debater requires and commonly solicits from his hearers, sufficiently refute.

It is well known indeed that he felt much too warmly upon all public topics; that he gave vent to his feelings too freely; and that he committed upon this, as upon some other occasions in his life, the fault of being too unreserved with the public at large, which, as experience has frequently proved, treats those statesmen with the least consideration who exhibit towards it the greatest candour and confidence; so that concealment and art, though considered as the vices of a high public character, are almost necessary to such a person to enjoy the favour of those whom he serves. In debate Mr. Burke's warmth was sufficiently punished on this question by unjust insinuations in the House, by abundant abuse in the newspapers, and by cries of *order!* frequently repeated, which, being once pertinaciously urged in what he thought a frivolous or party spirit, drew from him the following observation in reply, having more than once expressed contempt at the use of this exclamation:—

"Order is an admirable thing, perfect in all its limbs, but unfortunately it squints, or can see only on that side which tells for itself. Delicacy also I have the utmost wish to preserve; but delicacy, though a being of perfect symmetry, like the former, is only a subsidiary virtue, and ought always to give way to truth, where the case is such that the truth is of infinitely more importance than the delicacy." On another occasion he observed, that "delicacy was to truth, but as the ruffle to a shirt, and he did not admire the taste of those who were content to lay aside the shirt and to display only the ruffle."

Politicians militant commonly make the greatest excuses for each other; and there were many apologies for the warmth of Mr. Burke in the undoubted and admitted manœuvring of Ministry, which would have enabled them to jockey his friends out of the useful exercise of that power which they were on the point of acquiring, had they even gained it; likewise in the artful concealment of the design till the middle of December when it was ripe for execution; in the means made use of to instil ungenerous suspicions of her children into the mind of the Queen; in the anomalous principle of an elective regency in an hereditary monarchy; in the fraud and fiction, as he strongly termed it, of making the Great Seal, a thing of wax and copper, a substitute for a King, when a living, lawful, intelligent heir was at hand; in the number and nature of the restrictions imposed; in the conflicting opinions of the physicians; and something possibly in his own increasing irritability, the common offspring of increasing infirmity and age. No one understood the necessity for such allowances, or acted more fairly upon them, than Mr. Pitt; for though keenly sensitive to the sarcasms of his opponent, particularly when taunted with being a *competitor* for the Regency with the Prince, and to which he replied by an ungenerous accusation that Mr. Burke did not wish the King to recover, the occasion had no sooner ceased than it was forgotten on the part of both; both probably feeling that had their situations as to power been reversed, their conduct might not have materially differed.

The emergency, to any Minister, was new and difficult, but the characteristic dexterity of Mr. Pitt, and the democratical view which the preservation, or the speedy resumption of his ministerial power, rendered it expedient for him to take of it, tickled the popular feeling into a decided approval of all that he did. It was of course no more than natural that he should wish to retain the high and important station which he then held; and it is equally certain that had he thought there was the most distant hope of retaining it under the Regent, the restrictions upon the latter would not have been imposed. No man of any party can possibly doubt this. The justice of the restrictions was therefore, to say the least, questionable; they cast a suspicion where no suspicion ought to have fallen; and a deep manœuvre to preserve a Ministry became the means not only of impeding the useful exercise of the power of the Crown for a time, but perhaps more permanently to weaken public respect for it; a proceeding which, at any other time, or under other circumstances, Mr. Pitt himself would have most loudly reprobated.

Whatever be the opinion of that gentleman's public measures, or the purity of his motives, his private conduct certainly was manly; too unceremonious perhaps, too lofty, too unbending toward an Illustrious Personage to be consistent with the deference due to his high station in the state, though the Minister disclaimed the slightest intentional disrespect. The Chancellor displayed more art and infinitely more pliancy. Rough and knotted in character only when his official existence was not in danger, he on this occasion exhibited more of the willow than the oak in his composition, oscillating between the contending interests with a degree of elasticity of which he was previously not thought capable, and which, in the eyes of near observers, did not tend to exalt his character. For it is well known he was negociating at Carlton House for the preservation of his office nearly up to the moment that the recovery of the King became probable. Mr. Burke, necessarily aware of this, assailed him with several sarcasms, particularly on hearing of a burst of the pathetic, accompanied by tears, from him in the House of Lords, in allusion to the afflicting condition of His Majesty, when he said, "when I forget His Majesty's favours may God forget me."

"The theatrical tears then shed, were not the tears of patriots for dying laws, but of Lords for their expiring places; the iron tears which flowed down Pluto's cheek rather resembled the dismal bubbling of the *Styx* than the gentle murmuring streams of *Aganippe:* in fact, they were tears for his Majesty's bread; and those who shed them would stick by the King's loaf as long as a single cut of it remained, while even a crust of it held together." Of the affectionate behaviour of the Illustrious Personage most interested in these discussions, to both parents under invidious and trying circumstances, it is more difficult to speak, as the language of truth might be mistaken for impertinent praise. But when eulogy can have no aim, and the motive cannot be mistaken of those who speak of the fact as it deserves, it will be adduced as an example to children in every condition of life.

During the progress of this business, the correspondence of Mr. Burke with Lord Charlemont, who took the lead in the Irish House of Lords, and formed one of the deputation bearing its Address to the Prince, was frequent and confidential; he being indeed the only channel used for communication of the public opinion of Ireland, between that Nobleman and his Royal Highness. Of the latter, with whom he had several interviews, he speaks highly in a letter to his Lordship of April 4th, 1789 :—

"My dearest Lord,

"You do no more than strict justice in allowing the sincerity of my attachment to you, and my readiness on all occasions to obey your commands. My affections are concerned in your thinking so, and my pride in having it believed by as many as know me.

"After I had received your letter of the 24th of March I lost no time in attending the P—. I cannot say that I executed your Lordship's commission literally: I thought it better to let you speak for yourself. To have done otherwise would not have been to do justice to the P., to your Lordship, or even to the person charged with your commission. There never was any thing conceived more justly, or expressed with more elegance, than what you have said of his R. H. I did not think it right to spoil so just and so handsome a compliment, by giving it in any other words than your own. I risked more; and, without your authority, put the letter into his hands. The P. was much pleased, and I think affected. The account your Lordship has given of the state of politics in Ireland was certainly not what we could have wished, and indeed expected. It was, however, a relief to his R. H. as he found things much better than, from other accounts, he had conceived them.

"I never had the least idea that the Opposition in Ireland could continue against the presiding Administration here, however some individuals might be on principle adverse to it. I am charmed with what I have heard of the Duke of Leinster. I am happy to find him add a character of firmness to the rest of his truly amiable and respectable qualities. Ponsonby* then is, it seems, the Proto-Martyr. I never saw him until the time of your embassy; but I am not mistaken in the opinion I formed of him, on our first conversation, as a manly, decided character, with a right conformation of mind, and a clear and vigorous understanding. The world will see what is got by leaving a provoked, a powerful enemy; and how well faith is kept by those, whose situation is obtained by their infidelity, one would have thought that personal experience was not necessary for teaching that lesson. As to what you have said of the care to be taken of the Martyrs to their duty, that is a thing of course, in case an opportunity occurs. They would not be injured so much, as the leaders would be eternally disgraced, if they were not made their first objects. It would be a shame, indeed, if those who surrender should profit more by the generosity of their enemies, than those who hold out to the last biscuit might by the justice and gratitude of their friends. Here we seem to have forgot all serious business.

" I have a thousand things to say to your Lordship on the part of the P. with regard to your principles, your liberality of sentiment, the goodness of your heart, and the politeness of your manners. I think him a judge of these things, and I see that he knows the value of a compliment from one, who has his civility for every body, but the expression of his approbation for very few." *

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* Afterwards Lord Ponsonby; dismissed, after the Regency question, from the office of Post-Master General.

It is remarkable that though every one else thought the exertions of Mr. Burke on this question very laborious, he did not seem to have the same opinion of them himself. " My time of life," said he, writing to the same Nobleman, July 10th, on this and other matters, " the length of my service, and the temper of the public, rendered it very unfit for me to exert myself in the common routine of Opposition." Yet he had exerted himself on several topics in parliament, with great zeal, in addition to the unceasing slavery of the impeachment in Westminster Hall.

With Mr. Fox, though without expressly naming him, he was evidently dissatisfied on the Regency question, and also with others of his coadjutors; alluding to these, and to continued ill-success, notwithstanding his extraordinary exertions, he has the following remarks in another passage of the same letter :—

" Perpetual failure, even though nothing in that failure can be fixed on the improper choice of objects, or the injudicious choice of means, will detract every day more and more from a man's credit, until he ends without success and without reputation. In fact, a constant pursuit even of the best objects, *without adequate instruments,* detracts something from the opinion of a man's judgment. This I think may be, in part, the cause of *the inactivity of others of our friends, who are in the vigour of life, and in possession of a great degree of lead and authority.* * * *

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* Hardy's Life of Lord Charlemont.

"My particular province has been the East Indies. We have rest, or something like it, for the present; but depend upon it I shall persevere to the end, and shall not add myself to the number of those bad examples, in which delinquents have wearied out the constancy of the prosecutors. We may not go through all the charges; I fear it will be out of our power to do this; but we shall give a specimen of each great head of criminality, and then call for judgment. So far as to a general view of my sole share of business."

The trial of Mr. Hastings to which he so pointedly alludes in the preceding letter, had with him at least lost none of its interest; for the spirit of an animated apostrophe which he addressed to a friend on meeting him in the street, the day after the impeachment was first voted, in allusion to that and other political events of the moment, seemed still to actuate him. "What a proud day," he exclaimed, "for England!—What a glorious prospect!—Her justice extending to Asia—her humanity to Africa—her friendship to America—and her faith and good will to all Europe!"

A bold though indirect attempt was now made to detach him from the pursuit of an object upon which he had already expended so much talent and almost incredible labour and perseverance. Having incidentally stated before the House of Lords that Mr. Hastings had murdered Nundcomar by the hands of Sir Elijah Impey, the former caused a petition to be presented to the Commons by his agent Major Scott, complaining of the words as irrelevant to the matter at issue, and calculated to prejudice him in the opinion of his judges. Mr. Burke replied that they were not irrelevant; for in urging a charge of pecuniary corruption against the culprit, it was to be expected he would not let slip the opportunity of naming the agent by whom the bribe was conveyed (from Munny Begum) and the means by which such agent was afterwards got rid of when he had threatened to become an accuser. On the same subject he also addressed the following letter to Mr. Montague, who read it to the House as part of his speech.

"My dear Sir,

"With the consent, as you know, and the approbation of the committee, I am resolved to persevere in the resolution I had formed, and had declared to the House, that nothing should persuade me upon any occasion, least of all upon the present occasion, to enter into a laboured, litigious, artificial defence of my conduct. Such a mode of defence belongs to another sort of conduct, and to causes of a different description.

"As a faithful and ingenuous servant, I owe to the House a plain and simple explanation of any part of my behaviour which shall be called in question before them. I have given this explanation, and in doing so I have done every thing which my own honour and my duty to the House could possibly require at my hands. The rest belongs to the

House. They, I have no doubt, will act in a manner fit for a wise body, attentive to its reputation. I must be supposed to know something of the duty of a prosecutor for the public; otherwise neither ought the House to have conferred that trust upon me, nor ought I to have accepted of it. I have not been disapproved by the first abilities in the kingdom, appointed by the same authority not only for my assistance, but for my direction and controul. You who have honoured me with a partial friendship, continued without interruption for twenty-four years, would not have failed in giving me that first and most decisive proof of friendship, to enlighten my ignorance and to rectify my mistakes. You have not done either; and I must act on the inference. It is no compliment to mention what is known to all the world, how well qualified you are for that office, from your deep parliamentary knowledge, and your perfect acquaintance with all eminent examples of the ancient and modern world.

"The House having upon an opinion of my diligence and fidelity (for they could have no other motive,) put a great trust into my hands, ought to give me an entire credit for the veracity of every fact I affirm or deny. But if they fail with regard to me, it is at least in my power to be true to myself. I will not commit myself in an unbecoming contention with the agents of a criminal, whom it is my duty to bring to justice. I am a member of a committee of secrecy, and I will not violate my trust by turning myself into a defendant, and bringing forward in my own exculpation, the evidence which I have prepared for his conviction. I will not let him know who the witnesses for the prosecution are, nor what they have to depose against him. Though I have no sort of doubt of the constancy and integrity of those witnesses, yet because they are men, and men to whom, from my situation, I owe protection, I ought not to expose them either to temptation or to danger. I will not hold them out to be importuned, or menaced, or discredited, or run down, or possibly to be ruined in their fortunes by the power and influence of this delinquent; except where the national service supersedes all other considerations. If I must suffer, I will suffer alone. No man shall fall a sacrifice to a feeble sensibility on my part, that at this time of day might make me impatient of those libels, which by despising through so many years, I have at length obtained the honour of being joined in commission with this committee, and of becoming an humble instrument in the hands of public justice.

" The only favour I have to supplicate from the House is, that their goodness would spare to the weakest of their members an unnecessary labour; by letting me know as speedily as possible, whether they wish to discharge me from my present office; if they do not, I solemnly promise them, that with God's assistance, I will, as a member of their committee, pursue their business to the end; that no momentary disfavour shall slacken my diligence in the great cause they have undertaken; that I will lay open with the force of irresistible proof, this dark scene of bribery, peculation, and gross pecuniary corruption which I have begun to unfold, and in the midst of which my course has been arrested.

"This poor Indian stratagem of turning the accuser into a defendant, has been too often and too uniformly practised by Deby Sing, Mr. Hastings, and Gunga Govind Sing, and other Banyans, black and white, to have any longer the slightest effect upon me, whom long service in Indian committees has made well acquainted with the politics of Calcutta. If the House will suffer me to go on, the moment is at hand when my defence, and included in it the defence of the House, will be made in the only way in which my trust permits me to make it, by proving judicially on this accusing criminal the facts and the guilt we have charged upon him. As to the relevancy of the facts, the committee of the impeachment must be the sole judge, until they are handed over to the court competent to give a final decision on their value. In that court the agent of Mr. Hastings will soon enough be called upon to give his own testimony with regard to the conduct of his principal; the agent shall not escape from the necessity of delivering it; nor will the principal escape from the testimony of his agent.

"I hope I have in no moment of this pursuit, (now by me continued in one shape or other for near eight years) shown the smallest symptom of collusion or prevarication. The last point in which I could wish to show it is in this charge, concerning pecuniary corruption;—a corruption so great and so spreading that the most unspotted character will be justified in taking measures for guarding themselves against suspicion. Neither hope, nor fear, nor anger, nor weakness, shall move me from this trust; nothing but an act of the House formally taking away my commission, or totally cutting off the means of performing it. I trust we are all of us animated by the same sentiment.

" This perseverance in us may be called obstinacy inspired by malice. Not one of us however has a cause of malice. What knowledge have we of Sir Elijah Impey, with whom you know we began; or of Mr. Hastings, whom we afterwards found in our way? Party views cannot be our motive. Is it not notorious, that if we thought it consistent with our duty, we might have at least an equal share of the Indian interest, which now is almost to a man against us?

" I am sure I reverence the House as a member of parliament and an Englishman ought to do; and shall submit to its decision with due humility. I have given this apology for abandoning a formal defence, in writing to you, though it contains in effect not much more than I have delivered in my place. But this mode is less liable to misrepresentation and a trifle more permanent. It will remain with you either for my future acquittal or condemnation, as I shall behave.

" I am, with sincere affection and respect,
" My dear Sir,
" Your faithful friend and humble servant,
" Edmund Burke."

Discussions on this matter took place in the Commons on the 27th and 30th of April, and the 1st and 4th of May, when, on the latter day, the Marquis of Graham moved that the words complained of " ought not to have been spoken," which was carried by a considerable majority. Mr. Bouverie immediately moved, " That the thanks of this House be given to the right honourable Edmund Burke, and the rest of the managers, for their exertions and assiduity in the prosecution of the impeachment against Warren Hastings, Esq. and that they be desired to persevere in the same." This being objected to by the Master of the Rolls as premature and improper, the previous question was moved by him and carried. The result of these votes gave considerable offence to the committee of managers. Two several meetings were held, one the same evening, the other the following morning, to consider of the propriety of surrendering at once a laborious duty, in the performance of which they were thus coldly supported ; but after some discussion it was resolved to proceed.

To this result Mr. Burke, as may be supposed, mainly contributed. From the first presentation of Mr. Hastings's petition, countenanced as it obviously was by ministry, he entertained suspicion of a design indirectly to interrupt, or wholly to get rid of a proceeding, never very agreeable to the highest authority in the kingdom, by exciting disgust in the minds of those appointed to carry it on. This stratagem, as he even some years afterwards considered it, he determined should not take effect with him ; and to intimate his resolution more generally that nothing short of a formal vote of the House to remove him, should slacken his exertions, the foregoing letter to Mr. Montague was written.

He prided himself on his perseverance on this occasion. Alluding to it two years afterwards in conversation with Sir Joshua Reynolds and Wilkes, he said, "the most brilliant day of my life, and that which I would most wish to live over again, was the day I appeared at the bar of the House of Lords with the censure of the Commons in my hand. I had but an hour to prepare myself; the resolution of the other managers to proceed in the business having only just been taken. Mr. Fox strongly urged me to relinquish the prosecution at that time:—Mr. Pitt as anxiously hoped I should; but had there been no higher motive, no moral principle at work to induce me to persevere, the disgrace of such a retreat, on account of such a provocation, and the weakness of mind it would have indicated, must have proved fatal to any public character."

The following letter relates to an earlier stage of the proceedings; it is to Mrs. Sheridan, and was meant as a stimulant to the memory of her husband, whose indolence or negligence in public or private affairs, often required this species of *refresher*.

"MADAM,

"I am sure you will have the goodness to excuse the liberty I take with you when you consider the interest which I have and which the public have, (the said public being at least half an inch a taller person than I am) in the use of Mr. Sheridan's abilities. I know that his mind is seldom unemployed; but then, like all such great and vigorous minds, it takes an eagle flight by itself and we can hardly bring it to rustle along the ground with us birds of meaner wing, in coveys. I only beg that you will prevail on Mr. Sheridan to be with us *this day*, at half after three, in the committee. Mr.

Wombwell, the paymaster of Oude, is to be examined there *to-day*. Oude is Mr. Sheridan's particular province; and I do most seriously ask that he would favour us with his assistance. What will come of the examination I know not; but without him I do not expect a great deal from it; with him I fancy we may get out something material. Once more let me intreat your interest with Mr. Sheridan, and your forgiveness for being troublesome to you, and to do me the justice to believe me with the most sincere respect,

"Madam, your most obedient
"And faithful humble servant,
"Thursday, 9 o'clock. "EDM. BURKE."

Another, addressed to Sheridan himself, iterates something of the same feeling of the necessity for *pushing* forward his more careless colleague to the effectual performance of the important duty he had undertaken; and evidently alludes to the wit having broken a previous appointment on the subject, and his own chagrin in consequence of it.

"MY DEAR SIR,

"You have only to wish to be excused to succeed in your wishes; for indeed he must be a great enemy to himself who can consent, on account of a momentary ill-humour, to keep himself at a distance from you.

"Well, all will turn out right,—and half of you, or a quarter, is worth five other men. I think that this cause, which was originally yours, will be recognized by you, and that you will again possess yourself of it. The owner's mark is on it, and all our docking and cropping cannot hinder its being known and cherished by its original master. My most humble respects to Mrs. Sheridan. I am happy to find that she takes in good part the liberty I presumed to take with her. Grey has done much, and will do every thing. It is a pity that he is not always toned to the full extent of his talents.

"Most truly yours,

"Monday. "EDM. BURKE.

"I feel a little sickish at the approaching day. I have read much—too much perhaps—and in truth am but poorly prepared. Many things too have broken in upon me."

Another measure, scarcely less dear to his reason and his feelings, was the abolition of the slave trade, for which he pronounced (May 12th) an animated and argumentative address. "He thought the House, the nation, and all Europe under very great and serious obligations to the honourable gentleman (Mr. Wilberforce) for having brought the subject forward in a manner the most masterly, impressive and eloquent. A trade begun with savage war, prosecuted with unheard-of cruelty, continued during the mid-passage with the most loathsome imprisonment, and ending in perpetual exile and unremitted slavery, was a trade so horrid in all its circumstances, that it was impossible a single satisfactory argument could be adduced in its favour."

The penal laws became another subject for the exertion of his humane spirit, (May 28th, on a bill for encouraging the growth of roots, trees, and shrubs) reprobating their number and severity, stating the whole system to be radically defective and derogatory to a civilized country, though undue punishments were still attempted to be multiplied—a course of legislation he always had opposed, and should ever continue to oppose. A revision of the whole criminal code was necessary, for in its present state it was abominable. On the question of the choice of a Speaker (June 8th) he supported his friend Sir Gilbert Elliot against the Minister's friend (Mr. Addington, now Lord Sidmouth), and as a contrast perhaps to some depreciating remarks of Mr. Pitt on the opposition candidate, laid claim to a merit which has never been denied him. "Whatever faults he (Mr. Burke) might have, he never had attempted to lower rising talents in public esteem. On the contrary, if he ever had any merit, it was in hailing those superior talents whenever he had discovered them. The blossoming abilities of young members always afforded him the highest satisfaction, because it struck him as a renovation of the stock of public talent, and a pleasing earnest of the preservation of the constitution."

These, with some discussions respecting libels on the House, published in the paper called the "World," and several matters of less importance, formed his chief exertions in parliament until its rising. The cessation of labour, however, brought with it little pleasure, for the political horizon presented no cheering prospect. Something of this feeling seems to be expressed in the conclusion of the letter to Lord Charlemont, of July 10, 1789, already quoted. "As to the politics of Ireland, as

I see nothing in them very pleasant, I do not wish to revive in your mind what your best philosophy is required to make tolerable. Enjoy your Marino* and your amiable and excellent family. These are comfortable sanctuaries when more extensive views of society are gloomy, and unpleasant, and unsafe."

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At the close of this session, indeed, a period of parliamentary as well as of general tranquillity seemed at hand. No object of prominent interest was before the public. The late contest about the Regency had been set at rest by the recovery of the King. The impeachment, however fresh in the minds of its conductors, had lost much of its hold on public curiosity. And the preceding letter indicated a damp on the mind of the writer of being doomed to some degree of political inaction, a state which, though he sometimes appeared in his letters to covet, was in fact wholly alien to his temperament and habits; for these, however occasionally delighted with retirement, were in spirit and by practice of the most active description.

But a week had not elapsed after it was written, when the storming of the Bastille in Paris, the defection of the army, the lawless massacres of the mob, the flight of many of the nobility and part of the royal family, and the entire dissolution of the powers of government, seemed the consummation by open outrage of the moral disorders which for two or three years had pervaded a neighbouring kingdom.

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* A beautiful villa near Dublin, commanding the whole sweep of the bay, and much of the surrounding country.

France, in the eyes of an Englishman, had for centuries presented a striking contrast to his own country, especially in one conspicuous and leading point. Long her equal in science, in the arts, in letters, in war, abounding in men of great genius and attainments, and in clear and extended views, and pre-eminent in all the amenities of polished life, she was yet but a savage in the knowledge or proper appreciation of freedom. She had acquired all things but that alone which is the most valuable of all, and which most ennobles man in his own opinion;—the light of liberty was the only light which had not shone upon her; the spirit to acquire national freedom was the only spirit in which she had shown herself deficient. Little desirous of amending her old institutions of despotism, she had continued quietly to submit to them for nearly two centuries after England had thrown the greater part completely off; as if example itself in this most contagious of all feelings, and occurring even at her doors, was fated to fall dead to the ground without imitation, and with scarcely a feeling of sympathy. A portion of this indifference arose from her overweening vanity. Conceited beyond all nations, she despised whatever was not her own; and wrapped up in the splendours of military glory and absolute monarchy, she not only could not understand the advantage of our more popular form of government, but contemned it as inefficient to her favourite purposes of war and aggrandizement. With characteristic self-complacency, some of her statesmen and all her courtiers, pronounced it as suited only to a people whose national spirit and manners they were pleased to say partook equally of barbarity. Some occasional consciousness of political degradation had indeed been exhibited by many of her eminent men during the preceding fifty years, but it was partial and soon forgotten. The wheels of government continued to roll on, clogged indeed by the filth which an absolute monarchy has a natural tendency to engender, but still in motion, and might have continued still to move, had not financial difficulties, soon after the close of the American war, precipitated an event for which the people in power were wholly unprepared.

To remedy these inconveniencies and to restore public credit, the *Notables,* a selection from the higher order of each class of persons in the kingdom, were at length assembled, followed by the convocation of her ancient legislature, the States General, when, by very ordinary efforts of honesty and common sense, France might have acquired for herself all that could be desired in the way of freedom and security. But the mass of her people were ignorant; the nobility and clergy bigoted to invidious privileges and exemptions above other orders in the state; the ties of religion loosened in the higher and middling classes, by a most extensive and extraordinary conspiracy of Atheists and Deists; the state of morals, among the same classes, scandalously licentious; and when the moment of difficulty came, the King—himself a Lot in the midst of Gomorrah—was compelled to encounter a most alarming state of things surrounded by few good men, and scarcely a single wise one.

The scenes that ensued need not be retraced; they are painful to contemplate, and two or three centuries hence will scarcely be believed. But the deliberative body, the assembled *virtue*, and *property*, and *talent* of the nation, presented the most fearful as well as the most curious spectacle of all. It is difficult even now to tell whether knavery or folly predominated most in its proceedings. It is true there were in it some clever, and many good men, but these were far outnumbered by the designing, the unprincipled, the ignorant; by dreamers, and by speculative philosophers ignorant of the first elements of political science, who, in attempting to carry their fanciful reveries into effect, converted anarchy into a species of system.

They took a constitution in hand, as a savage would a looking-glass, or a boy a Chinese puzzle; it was requisite to pull it to pieces in order to discover the cohering but hidden charm within. All the balances of the State were therefore overturned, the rights of property infringed, distinctions as old as the foundation of the kingdom abrogated. There was no attempt made to retain the shattered elements of the State which were in themselves good—no wise design, as Lord Bacon expresses it, to weed, to prune, and to graft, rather than to plough up and plant all afresh—but a seeming desire to drag up every thing by the roots, to enjoy a species of moral chaos, to revel in the luxury of inextricable confusion; and so generally was this spirit disseminated that many of the nobility and clergy, whose interests and very existence were at stake by the schemes in agitation, became the most forward instruments of their own destruction; some from a love for popularity, but the majority from utter want of foresight as to consequences. Among the Members of the Assembly, the presumed wisdom of the nation, might be seen (very soon afterwards at least) that theoretical perfection of representation so much admired by one class of politicians practically put to the test. Every class of society, almost to the offal, was, as the drama advanced, ransacked for deputies. The fruits were such as might be expected; men without wisdom, without dignity, without property, without experience, or consistency of conduct, whose meetings had little of the character of deliberation, and whose deeds, as the revolution proceeded, would, but for their atrocity, have been as laughable for folly as they were defective in every quality of grave consideration.

A curious inquirer might trace among many of its members, and among the chief agents who worked their way by their follies or daring crimes into the service of the State during the confusion, a remarkable animosity in individuals toward their former avocations or attachments.

Here were to be seen noblemen denouncing the order of nobility; ministers of a despotic monarchy calling for a republic; courtiers cutting off the King's head; priests voting religion a nuisance; lawyers overturning all semblance of law or justice; philosophers admitting of no argument but the guillotine; poets chaunting the necessity for blood; painters coolly catching the finishing touches of their art in the dying struggles of the scaffold; for all these facts literally occurred.—Below these again, and still more active in the work of revolutionary *purification*, were tradesmen—butchers, brewers, bakers, and others—busily occupied in thinning, by means of the guillotine, the mouths they had contributed to feed; and school-masters, musicians, players, dancing-masters, exterminating those orders of society who had previously formed their chief or only means of support.

The people at large were not unworthy of such representatives, and such authorities. Paris, and much of the country, became transformed into a den of uncaged maniacs, acting the most wild and horrible extravagances, such as no country barbarous or civilized ever before offered;—beyond even the murderous jollities of Ashantee. Were not the facts notorious, it would be difficult to believe that human nature had been so bad;—the rights of man, ostentatiously proclaimed, and every instant atrociously violated; religion defamed and abolished, to make way for the goddess of reason; morality derided; public massacres sanctioned; anarchy legalized; quarter to English prisoners of war, disallowed by the public vote of the Deputies of the nation; proscription and bloodshed decreed to be the duty, almost the recreation, of the execrable ruffians in power; even the dead torn from their graves to undergo the most revolting indignities. All the ties that bind men together seemed to be dissolved. Obligations had no longer power to conciliate, or gratitude to bind the dependant to his benefactor; brother warred with brother; the son with his father, wherever there appeared the least hesitation in dooming to destruction all who possessed wealth, rank, or principle. For about five years all Europe gazed with affright and astonishment at this spectacle, which, embodying the crimes and barbarities of the most ferocious of mankind within the compass of a single state, rendered its government or rather its tyrants detestable, its people infamous, and liberty thus abused the direst of all curses.

In England, the first movements of the Revolution were hailed as the regeneration of a large portion of the human race. Mr. Fox and Mr. Pitt tendered it their tribute of admiration. Mr. Burke alone was more cautious or more penetrating. He professed to admire the principle as much as any one; but, either from that uncommon sagacity he had ever displayed on great national questions, from his greater age and consequent experience in life, from a greater knowledge of mankind, or from a clearer insight into the French character, he entertained from the first some extraordinary misgivings as to its mode of operation and result.

Few things in political history are more interesting than to trace the first symptoms of this hesitation to approve, what other and even great men thought it almost their duty, instantly, and by acclamation, to admire. Among his first sentiments on this topic committed to paper, if not the very first, was a letter to Lord Charlemont, dated 9th of August 1789, about three weeks after the storming of the Bastille, in which he opens his mind without reserve:—

" As to us here, our thoughts of every thing at home are suspended by our astonishment at the wonderful spectacle which is exhibited in a neighbouring and rival country. What spectators, and what actors? England gazing with astonishment at a French struggle for liberty, and not knowing whether to blame or to applaud.

"The thing, indeed, though I thought I saw something like it in progress for several years, has still somewhat in it paradoxical and mysterious. The spirit it is impossible not to admire; but the old Parisian ferocity has broken out in a shocking manner. It is true, that this may be no more than a sudden explosion; if so, no indication can be taken from it; but if it should be *character*, rather than accident, then that people are not fit for liberty, and must have a strong hand, like that of their former masters, to coerce them.

"Men must have a certain fund of natural moderation to qualify them for freedom, else it becomes noxious to themselves, and a perfect nuisance to every body else. What will be the event, it is hard, I think, still to say. To form a solid constitution requires wisdom as well as spirit; and whether the French have wise heads among them, or if they possess such, whether they have authority equal to their wisdom, is yet to be seen. In the mean time the progress of this whole affair is one of the most curious matters of speculation that ever was exhibited."

Nothing can be more unambiguous and unreserved, or more consistent with the active part he afterwards took, than this avowal made in the confidence of friendship—that the spirit to aim at liberty was praiseworthy, but that the ultimate approval by wise and good men must depend upon the manner in which that desire should be carried into effect. The apprehensions which overshadowed his mind are obvious in this letter, and similar sentiments were communicated, both verbally and in writing, to other friends. His judgment might be said (without a figure) to be suspended over it like the sword of Damocles, and with almost equal power to destroy.

In the mean time, with his accustomed diligence, no means were left untried of procuring information, desiring all his acquaintance in Paris, and all who were going thither, to transmit him whatever they could collect, whether of a private nature, or the more public documents which might appear on either side. Among his correspondents at this moment, besides M. Dupont and other natives of distinction of the reasonable class of well-wishers to freedom, were others, mostly foreigners, of a different stamp; such as Mr. Christie, the noted Thomas Paine, and the equally notorious Baron (otherwise Anacharsis) Clootz; the two latter more especially, who, though in principle the very fanatics of revolution and republicanism, were at this moment fated to supply, unintentionally on their part, some of the materials which Mr. Burke, with equal speed and dexterity, sharpened into their most powerful antidotes.

To another correspondent, M. de Menonville, a relation of the Baron de Menou and a member of the National Assembly, who requested his opinion of their affairs towards the end of September, 1789, he wrote early in the following month, plainly exhibiting the gradual development of his opinions and apprehensions, as events took a more decided turn:

"As you are pleased to think, that your splendid flame of liberty was first lighted up at my faint and glimmering taper, you have a right to call upon me for my sentiments on whatever relates to that subject. * * * *

"You may easily believe, that I have had my eyes turned with great curiosity, and no small concernment, to the astonishing scene now displayed in France. It has certainly given rise in my mind to many reflections, and to some emotions. These are natural and unavoidable; but it would ill become me, to be too ready in forming a positive opinion upon matters transacted in a country, with the correct political map of which I must be very imperfectly acquainted. Things, indeed, have already happened so much beyond the scope of all speculation, that persons of infinitely more sagacity than I have ought to be ashamed of any thing like confidence in reasoning upon the operation of any principle, or the effect of any measure. It would become me least of all to be so confident, who ought at my time of life to have well learned the important lesson of self-distrust—a lesson of no small value in company with the best information—but which alone can make any sort of amends for our not having learned other lessons so well as it was our business to learn them.

"I beg you once for all to apply this corrective of diffidence in my own judgment to whatever I may happen to say with more positiveness than suits my knowledge and situation. Never suppose that any appearance that I may show of disapprobation to what is now transacted is meant to express more than a doubt. We have but one advantage over you in France—we are nearer to the character of cool bye-standers.

"You hope, Sir, that I think the French deserving of liberty. I certainly do. I certainly think that all men who desire it, deserve it. It is not the reward of our merit, or the acquisition of our industry. It is our inheritance. It is the birth-right of our species. We cannot forfeit our right to it, but by what forfeits our title to the privileges of our kind, *I mean the abuse or oblivion of our national faculties; and a ferocious indocility, which makes us prompt to wrong and violence, destroys our social nature, and transforms us into something little better than a description of wild beasts.* To men so degraded a state of strong constraint is a sort of necessary substitute for freedom; since, bad as it is, it may deliver them in some measure from the worst of all slavery, that is, the despotism of their own blind and brutal passions. You have kindly said that you began to love freedom from your intercourse with me. Permit me then to continue our conversation, and to tell you what the freedom is that I love. It is not solitary, unconnected, individual, selfish liberty. It is social freedom. *It is that state of things in which the liberty of no man, and no body of men, is in a condition to trespass on the liberty of any person, or any description of persons, in society.* This kind of liberty is, indeed, but another name for justice, ascertained by wise laws, and secured by well-constructed institutions. I am sure that liberty so incorporated, and in a manner identified with justice, must be infinitely dear to every man, who is capable of conceiving what it is.

But whenever a separation is made between liberty and justice, neither is, in my opinion, safe. I do not believe that men ever did submit, certain I am that they never ought to have submitted, to the arbitrary pleasure of one man, but under circumstances, in which the arbitrary pleasure of many persons in the community, pressed with an intolerable hardship upon the just and equal rights of their fellows. Such a choice might be made as among evils. The moment *will* is set above reason and justice in any community, a great question may arise in sober minds, in what part or portion of the community that dangerous dominion of *will* may be least mischievously placed. * * * *

"I have nothing to check my wishes towards the establishment of a solid and rational scheme of liberty in France. On the subject of the relative power of nations, I may have prejudices; but I envy internal freedom, security, and good order, to none. When, therefore, I shall learn that in France, the citizen, by whatever description he is qualified, is in a perfect state of legal security, with regard to his life, to his property, to the uncontrolled disposal of his person, to the free use of his industry and his faculties;—when I hear that he is protected in the beneficial enjoyment of the estates, to which, by the course of settled law, he was born, or is provided with a fair compensation for them; that he is maintained in the full fruition of the advantages, belonging to the state and condition of life, in which he had lawfully engaged himself, or is supplied with an equitable equivalent;—when I am assured, that a simple citizen may decently express his sentiments upon public affairs, without hazard to his life or liberty, even though against a predominant and fashionable opinion;—when I know all this of France, I shall be as well pleased as every one must be, who has not forgot the general communion of mankind, nor lost his natural sympathy in local and accidental connexions."

This paper, though not published by one of Mr. Burke's friends, is in itself too masterly and too characteristic, to be mistaken for the work of any other writer of the age; and the sentiments surely are such, as the most ardent lover of liberty cannot find fault with. In a second communication to the same correspondent, he becomes more explicit as the scene itself becomes changed:

"With regard to the state of things in France I am afraid that as matters appear to me at present, I cannot at all agree with you, until at least my information is as good as your's. I hope you do not think me weak enough to form my opinion of what is doing there from the representations in newspapers, much less upon those of the newspapers of a country in which the true spirit of the several transactions cannot be generally known.

"As for me, I have read, and with some attention, the authorized or rather equally authentic documents on this subject; from the first instructions to the representatives of the several orders, down to this time. What else I have read has been for the greater part on the side of those who have a considerable share in the formation and conduct of public measures. A great many of the most decisive events, I conceive, are not disputed as facts, though, as usual, there is some dispute about their causes and their tendencies. On comparing the whole of fact, of public document, and of what can be discerned of the general temper of the French people, I perfectly agree with you that there is very little likelihood of the old government's regaining its former authority. Were the King to escape from his palace, where he is now, in reality, a prisoner with his wife and almost his whole family, to what place could he fly? Every town in France is a Paris. I see no way by which a second revolution can be accomplished. The only chance seems to consist in the extreme instability of every species of power, and the uncertainty of every kind of speculation. In this I agree with you; in most other particulars I can by no means go so far. That a police is established in Paris, I can readily believe. They have an army, as I hear, of 6000 men, apparently under their command. * * * * They have the means of preserving quiet; and since they have completely attained their ends, they must have the disposition. A total anarchy is a self-destructive thing. *But if the same ends should hereafter require the same course, which have been already pursued, there is no doubt but the same ferocious delight in murder, and the same savage cruelty, will be again renewed.* If any of those horrid deeds, which surely have not been misrepresented to us, were the acts of the rulers, what are we to think of an armed people under such rulers? Or if (which possibly may be the case) there is in reality and substance no ruler, and that the chiefs are driven before the people, rather than lead them; and if the armed corps are composed of men, who have no fixed principle of obedience, and are embodied only by the prevalence of some general inclination; who can repute himself safe among a people so furious, and so senseless?

"As to the destruction of the Bastile, of which you speak, we both know it was a thing in itself of no consequence whatever. The Bastile was at first intended as a citadel undoubtedly; and when it was built it might serve the purposes of a citadel. Of late, in that view, it was ridiculous. It could not contain any garrison sufficient to awe such a city as Paris. As a prison it was of as little importance. Give despotism, and the prisons of despotism will not be wanting, any more than lamp-irons will be wanting to democratic fury.

"In all appearance, the new system is a most bungling and unworkmanlike performance. I confess I see no principle of coherence, co-operation, or just subordination of parts in this whole project, nor any the least aptitude to the conditions and wants of the state to which it is applied, nor any thing well imagined for the formation, provision, or direction of a common force. The direct contrary appears to me. * * *

"Man is a gregarious animal. He will by degrees provide some convenience suitable to this his natural disposition; and this strange thing *(the system adopted by the National Assembly)* may some time or other assume a more habitable form. The fish will at length make a shell which will fit him. I beg pardon for dwelling so long, and employing so much thought upon a subject, on which its contrivers have evidently employed so little. I cannot think, with you, that the Assembly have done much. They have, indeed, *undone* a great deal; and so completely broken up their country as a State, that I assure you there are few here such *antigallicans* as not to feel some pity on the deplorable view of the wreck of France. I confess to you, that till I saw it, I could not conceive that any men in public could have shown so little mercy to their country.

" You say, my dear sir, they read Montesquieu—I believe not. If they do, they do not understand him. He is often obscure, sometimes misled by system; but on the whole, a learned and ingenious writer, and sometimes a most profound thinker. Sure it is that they have not followed him in any one thing they have done. Had he lived at this time, he would certainly be among the fugitives from France. With regard to the other writers you speak of, I do believe the directors of the present system to be influenced by them! Such masters! Such scholars! Who ever dreamt of Voltaire and Rosseau as legislators? The first has the merit of writing agreeably; and nobody has ever united blasphemy and obscenity so happily together. The other was not a little deranged in his intellects, to my almost certain knowledge. But he saw things in bold and uncommon lights, and he was very eloquent.—But as to the rest, I have read long since the *Contrat Social.* It has left very few traces upon my mind. I thought it a performance of little or no merit; and little did I conceive that it could ever make revolutions, and give law to nations. But so it is. I see some people here are willing that we should become their scholars too, and reform our

State on the French model. They have begun; and it is high time for those who wish to preserve *morem majorum* to look about them."

At the time this was written, few indeed could agree in opinion with the sagacious writer, of the evils attendant on the Revolution. Yet after every allowance for the generous feelings of the moment in favour of a phantom which bore some resemblance to freedom, all considerate men must have been convinced, that the utter subversion of every institution long established in a State, can never, under any circumstances, be justifiable or wise. Even great changes in the supreme authorities, though, perhaps, sometimes necessary, are always fearfully dangerous. They must not be adopted but in the last extremity, and then managed only by the most delicate and experienced hands. Earthquakes and hurricanes possibly produce good, but few sober men like to be within the sphere of their operation. It is just so with revolutions. The good is often problematical. The way to it at least is through a bog of confusion and evil, a quagmire of moral desolation—of over-turned laws, property, and connexions—in which wantonly to throw down every ancient land-mark, is wilfully to wander out of the road, to sink deeper at every step we take, and to plunge into inextricable difficulties which destroy every hope of attaining the destination in view. Such, however, was the effect of example, that many persons in England, disregarding the blessings of the practical freedom they enjoyed, professed not only to admire the speculative reveries of France, but a wish to put some of the principal of them into practice. The delusion was widely spread and deeply-rooted,—more general, indeed, than it is now easy or agreeable to believe; nor did it, with a few even of our greatest men, speedily pass away.

A domestic affliction about this time detached his mind for a moment from contemplating public evils, to experience personally unfeigned private sorrow—a more vulnerable point of suffering, as even the most patriotic spirit must confess, to all men. This was the death of his sister, Mrs. French. A variety of private circumstances had tended to keep up little more than an epistolary communication during life, yet still with a hope fondly entertained by both, of spending the evening of their lives nearer to each other. To a friend and neighbour of Mrs. French's family (Oliver Dolphin, Esq. of Loughrea, Ireland) he addressed the following letter shortly after hearing of the melancholy event.

"Dear Sir,

"I have just received the afflicting news of my poor sister's death. You who knew her best, know the loss that I have had. Indeed, though four and twenty years have passed since I had the happiness of seeing her, her virtues which endeared her to me much more than our nearness of relation, have made this misfortune truly afflicting to me. The will of Providence had separated us for a great (the much greater) part of our lives—and now the same Sovereign dispensation has separated us on this side of the grave for ever. She was one of the best-hearted of the human race. I was in some hopes at times that I might make the latter part of a life spent under difficulties and afflictions a little pleasant to her. But that hope which I believe was hers, and my consolation is vanished—and this is one of the greatest and most mortifying disappointments I have felt through life.

"Sir, I do not know in what relation you stand to a gentleman of your name, Mr. Redmond Dolphin, whom very many years ago I had the honour of knowing and esteeming, as all did with whom he was acquainted. Whatever your relation to him may be, your relation to me by your kindness to my poor sister, and your protection to my afflicted niece, is very close and strong. I am indeed infinitely obliged to you. Continue to comfort her with the same humanity with which you have begun, until my friend Mr. Kiernan can do something for her settlement. I am afraid that my poor sister had not the consolation of seeing him before her departure * * *. Be assured that I am thoroughly sensible of my obligations to you and to your family, to whom I have not the happiness to be known, but to whom I wish you to present my most sincere acknowledgments.

"I am, with the greatest respect and regard,
"Dear Sir,
"Your most faithful and obliged humble servant,
"Beaconsfield, Jan. 12, 1790." "EDM. BURKE."

* * * * *

Since the above was transcribed for the press, the following letters, in the original, addressed to Mrs. French by her brother Edmund, his lady and son, and also from her brother Richard, have been put into the hands of the writer by a gentleman whose relationship to the parties renders his communications as valuable and authentic as they are kind. Those given here, are a selection from among many others which relate solely to family affairs. They are a discovery made only within a few weeks, having been, it appears, carefully put away in a bundle of other papers, deposited with an intimate friend of Mrs. French's family, and not opened for a period of nearly forty years.

The first is from Mrs. Burke, the wife of Edmund, addressed to Mrs. French on her marriage, by which it appears that her zealous and industrious husband, who had just commenced his first session with the Rockingham party, was so immersed day and night in ministerial business, that he had only time to add a short postscript to the letter, expressive of his satisfaction on the occasion.

"I most truly and affectionately wish you, my dear sister, joy on the change you have made in life. It is a change that I make not the least doubt will insure happiness to you, and to all your friends the pleasure and satisfaction that an union made by you must give them; we are all very happy in being connected with a man of Mr. French's character, which Mr. Ridge has very fully and very satisfactorily given us. I wish you many years to enjoy the satisfaction and happiness that lies before you; and many years I hope you will live to enjoy it; I can only add my prayers and hearty wishes that you should, which I do from the bottom of my heart. I leave it to you, and surely I cannot leave it in better hands, to make my love to Mr. French. I wish I had it in my power to wish you both joy myself by word of mouth, but I hope before the summer is over I shall do so, as we think, if possible, to take a turn to Ireland about that time.

" I had wrote thus far when I got your letter, and it makes us all very happy to hear you are well, and so much pleased with your present situation. Ned is so taken up that he has scarce time to eat, drink, or sleep ; he has not been in bed this week until three or four o'clock in the morning, and his hurry will not be over, I am afraid, the whole winter. If he can he will add to this, but if he should not be able so to do, I am sure you will not doubt of his love and affection for you both. Dick* is not yet come home, but we expect him every day, nay he may be here before I seal this, and if he is, you shall hear of him.

" Your nephew† is grown very stout, strong, and tall ; he is at school about four miles from town, at present learning Latin, and very eager he is at it ; he does not forget his aunt Julia, nor her goodness to him. He is to be home on Saturday for a week, which he has got on account of his birth-day, so that you see what consequence a birth-day is to us now.

" Mr. William Burke desires I would assure you from him how happy he is at every thing that gives you pleasure, and that he sincerely wishes you joy on the present occasion. My father joins in the same wish, and in love and compliments to Mr. French and you : believe me, my dear sister, no one more truly and affectionately loves you, or wishes for every happiness to attend you more than your affectionate sister and humble servant.

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* Richard Burke.

† R. Burke, Jun. her son.

" Queen Anne Street, " Jane Burke."
" Feb. 6, 1766."

The P. S. from Edmund bears evident traces in the MS. as well as in the style, of being written in haste.

" My dear Julian.

" Upon my word I have only time to say I most heartily wish you and Mr. French much joy; and to you both the good sense and good nature to make it your endeavour to contribute all you can to one another's happiness: I wish you both many years enjoyment of it, and am, with my regards to my brother, my dear Julia,

" Your most affectionate,
" E. Burke."

The following, written by the mother of Edmund, Mrs. Mary Burke, to her niece, Mrs. Henessy, gives an account of her daughter, (Mrs. French's) confinement of the daughter who afterwards became Mrs. Haviland; and likewise some particulars of her son's visit to Loughrea immediately after the dissolution of the first Rockingham administration, with a just tribute of maternal admiration to his heart and understanding.

" Loughrea, October 25, 1766.

" My dear Nelly.

" The last post brought me your very agreeable and welcome letter, and I am greatly pleased to hear that you and our friends with you are all well, and am sure it will be very agreeable to you to hear that poor Julia is doing as well as can be expected * * *. It happened on the evening of the day that her brothers and sister set off for Dublin.

"I believe I need not tell you that my pleasure in having them here, where I kept them constantly in view during the period of their stay, was heartily dashed at parting. All the gentlemen and ladies of this town and neighbourhood made a point to visit them, and they had as many invitations to dinner, had they thought fit to accept them all, as would have occupied a great many days. Mr. French, of Rasan, was (absent) in Corke when they came to this country; but on the morning after his arrival, he, Miss Nagle, Mrs. O'Flaherty, and Miss Driscoll came, here, and two days after we were all engaged at Rasan, where we dined, and could not well get from thence that night, and it was with much to do Jane and I could get away.

"Mr. French, (of Rasan) Ned and Dick went to look at Galway, and at a great lake which is near to it: as soon as they arrived in the town the bells were set ringing in honour of them; on the Monday following the Corporation met and voted the freedom of the City to Ned, to be sent to him in a silver box. My dear Nelly, I believe you'll think me very vain, but as you are a mother, I hope you will excuse it. I assure you it is not the honours that are done him which make me vain of him, but the goodness of his heart, than which I believe no man living has a better; I am sure there cannot be a better son, nor I think a better daughter-in-law, than his wife. I will say nothing of Dick, for you would have no longer patience with me * * * *.

"This is a very agreeable town to live in, and I believe there is not another in Ireland so small that has in it so many families of fortune as residents. I hope to be in Dublin about the middle of next month, where I shall find a great change from a very good table of two courses, and abroad a coach and six to take the air, to return to a leg of mutton, and otherwise a plain style of living at home and of going abroad. However, I will be as content with the latter as with the former, and will think myself very happy if it pleases God to preserve me the few children I have left alive and well * * * * *. I have filled my paper, and have only room left to wish you all happiness, and to believe me to be

"Your most affectionate aunt,

"MARY BURKE."

Some further particulars of the election for Bristol are given by Mr. Burke himself in the following communication, written from the scene of contest—

"MY DEAR SISTER,

"I seldom write to you, or to my brother French; I am a bad correspondent at the best. But believe me, you are neither of you ever out of my mind or estranged from my affections. If it were in my power to contribute any thing to your ease, advantage, or satisfaction, I would most cheerfully do it. But the part I have acted, and must continue to act, whilst things continue as they are, makes me a very insignificant person. The only recompence I have is, that I sometimes receive some marks of public approbation. I know it will give you both pleasure to hear, that after having been elected for Malton in Yorkshire, several respectable people of this city invited me to stand a candidate here, and that I am elected by a majority of 251, after one of the longest and warmest contests that has been remembered. The party that has lost the election threatens a petition; but I am satisfied they have no solid grounds to proceed upon. The election has lasted a month. I was put in nomination several days before I came hither. My absence gave the other party great advantages. My brother, who was in London, when the messengers from this city arrived at my house there, came to Bristol and prevented our affairs from suffering so much as otherwise they would have done by my absence. For I was then two hundred and twenty miles from London, and 270 at least from Bristol. This event has given us all great satisfaction, and will give, I trust, a great deal to you. This is the second city in the kingdom; and to be invited, and chosen, for it without any request of mine, at no expense to myself, but with much charge and trouble to many public-spirited gentlemen, is an honour to which we ought not to be insensible.

"Your sister was well when I heard from her. Since I left London thieves broke into our house in town; but they were discovered before they could take away any thing valuable; and Mrs. Burke, who is used to receive expresses at all hours of the night, hearing an alarm in the house, thought it an express from Bristol, and therefore was much less frighted than otherwise she would have been. The robbers made their escape.

"Your nephew, Richard, has returned from France, and is now at the University of Oxford. Your brother joins me in the most affectionate regards to you, to my brother, and your little one. Adieu my dear sister, and believe me your ever affectionate brother,

"EDMUND BURKE.

"Bristol, Nov. 2d. 1774."

To his cousin, Mrs. Henessy, he was obliged to communicate the disappointment of some hopes he had been inadvertently the cause of exciting—

"MY DEAR NELLY,

"I send you enclosed the copies of two letters, which cannot be more displeasing to you than they were to me. I send them to let you see, when I gave you hopes, I had reason to hope myself, and that if you are, as you must be, cruelly disappointed, the fault is not mine. The gentleman, the copy of whose letter you have, is a young man of an excellent character, large fortune, and my particular friend. I had not the least idea given to me of a purchase, I had never heard of any such thing before in the Company's service; and I had actually given my thanks to this gentleman, and to another friend, as for a favour gratuitously obtained. The cause of my turning my thoughts to a military establishment in India for your son, was upon an application from Mrs. French, of Rahasane, to procure a

Cadetcy for a friend of hers. Whilst I was in pursuit of this object my friend pointed out to me a Lieutenancy in the new Corps, as a thing much better, and, as he conceived, full as easily obtained. He spoke so warmly, and just at that instant I seemed to have so good an interest, that I spoke for two. My first thoughts were for James Nagle, of the Somersetshire Militia, who has already engaged in the military line, but on a peace would be left wholly unprovided and helpless. But on further recollection, as he has some immediate means of subsistence, and that as it was not impossible that between this and the time of peace I might get him into some old regiment, I turned my mind to you; and actually got from Mr. Pitt* a power of changing my nomination. I actually got a promise both for Mrs. French's friend and for your son. How I have been disappointed you see.

" This, my dear friend, is a true history of the affair, an affair perfectly vexatious to me. I am not apt to raise expectations in my friends. The part which my opinion of duty obliges me to take in public gives me no opportunity of serving them; and I should be sorry to become the means of deceiving them. Ned Barrett sticks in my stomach for many years. But I believe he is good enough to think that if I have deceived him, I was first imposed on myself. My wife desires her affectionate compliments to you, to your father, and the whole family. My brother and son are on the Circuit, one in the North, the other in the West.

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* A relative of the future Minister.

Will you forgive the disappointment I have caused to you?

"I am ever with sincere affection,
"My dear Cousin,
"Your faithful friend and kinsman,
"EDMUND BURKE.

"Beaconsfield, Sept. 5, 1781."

Immediately after the accession of the Whigs to office in 1782, the event was communicated to their relation, in the following joint letter from the two Richards, uncle and nephew, and Mrs. Burke—

"MY DEAR SISTER,

"I should not know how to begin or end a letter to you, if I had not the most perfect reliance on your good nature and love for us all. Indeed my dearest Julia, my long cruel silence has not been from neglect, much less from choice. Surely our sister will not think that she was for a moment forgot by either of her brothers, by her sister, to whom she is very dear, or her nephew, to whom we are all dear. We do not choose, however, to enter into many particular reasons for that silence in a past letter; we entirely trust to your good sense, and your good nature on that occasion.

"I am very sorry that it was not in the power of any of us to be the first to inform you of the late changes; your nephew during the whole time was absent from town on the Northern, and I, on the Western Circuit. Edmund was too much involved in business, and I am very little less. You have, however, some time since been fully informed of the late changes here; and you, therefore, know, that after seventeen years of the most laborious and general service, His Majesty has been pleased to take your brother Edmund into his more immediate service. He is Paymaster, and sworn into the Privy Council. Richard is his Deputy Paymaster, and I (through him), am Secretary to the Treasury, an office perfectly to my satisfaction in every respect. My dear sister, you have been the first object of Edmund's thoughts and attention, and measures are already taken for putting you and your daughter at your ease; for the present we send for your immediate use one hundred pounds English, through Mr. Kiernan. He will forward this letter to you, and receive your direction for the money. May God, my dear sister, bless you and your child; kiss her for us, and tell her that we love her heartily, and bid her love us even without knowing us. Adieu, my dear woman, and believe me,

"Your truly affectionate brother,

"RICHARD BURKE.

"London, 6th April.

"Let us hear from you immediately; direct to either of us or to your sister."

"MY DEAREST AUNT,

"Since I have so long delayed what I ought long ago to have done, I mean opening a correspondence with you, I am happy to be able to do it at a moment which promises that our acquaintance will not be confined to letters. Till very lately my hopes of seeing you were far removed, now I trust we shall not be very long asunder. There is nothing more near my heart than to see all those united together in place and in happiness, who, I trust, are most cordially so in affection. You hardly remember me I am afraid; if you do it is but as a child; since I have been otherwise you have no great reason to be pleased with me. I only remember you by the impressions which your kindness to my childhood made on me. Some day or other I hope to convince you that they are strong and sincere; at present I can only persuade you of my affection, by telling you, that as I love my father and my uncle, for their sakes, with whom I am more acquainted, I cannot be indifferent to you. Do me the favour to write to me, and let me know all circumstances which concern you and yours. There is one person in whom I am much interested; her indeed I do not know, for she was born since I saw you. I mean my cousin. Assure her of my sincere affections. She is indeed the nearest relation I have that any way approaches to my time of life. I wish most impatiently to see both her and you, and, as many of the circumstances which have separated us are now removed, that time is, I hope, not far distant. My father and uncle are both in perfect health, particularly the first, I believe a little altered from what you remember them, but not much. My mother perfectly well; she will conclude this letter by telling you that she loves you. Give my love to my Cousin, and desire her to write to me. Adieu my dear Aunt, and believe to be your affectionate and dutiful nephew, "RICHARD BURKE.

"London, April 7th, 1782."

"My dear, dear Sister,

"I never wrote to you with more heartfelt satisfaction than I do at present, for I can tell you, that now we can be a comfort and use to you, my dear sister, and my dear little niece, whom we all love. I got your letter, and the deed is making out to enable Mr. Burke to resign the lease in Mr. William Burke's name. But as you have the lease, we ought to know whether the old lease is for lives or years. This you must tell us as soon as possible. Mr. Burke says you may now, as you have *qualified*,* take it in your own name, which will be the best way of doing it. My love to my little niece, and I am, dear sister, ever yours affectionately,

"April 6th, 1782." "Jane Burke.

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* This alludes to the repeal some time before of certain clauses in the Penal Laws against the Roman Catholics. Mr. Burke had good reason to detest this abominable code, not merely as an enlightened statesman, but from the evil effects it had produced in his own family. Mr. French, who was of that communion, possessed a handsome personal property at the time of his marriage with Miss Burke, but being unable to purchase lands, or otherwise invest it in a secure and permanent way on account of being restricted in such disposal of his money, by the grinding oppression of the laws in question, embarked it in building houses on the lands of others, and in farming and grazing upon an extensive scale. In neither pursuit was he very successful. A great mortality among sheep and cattle some years afterwards almost ruined him; and between repairs, bad tenants, and the lapse of leases, his houses proved little more profitable. The consequence was the involvement of his family in occasional difficulties, which Edmund, out of his own scanty income, relieved at all times with a generosity and kindness truly characteristic of the man, and of which (and to others as well), were it necessary ostentatiously to parade such matters before the public—the writer could furnish a great variety of instances.

After the accession of the Coalition Ministry to office, when her brother's prospects again brightened, Mrs. French received the following (among others, not preserved) from Mrs. Burke, expressive of the anxiety of the family to do all in their power for their niece—

"Charles-street, April 5, 1783.

"My dear Sister,

"I have now news for you, that will again make you happy, and consequently I could not let any time pass without letting you know it. Yesterday your brother Ned kissed the King's hand on being appointed Paymaster, and your brother Richard is again Secretary of the Treasury.

"You shall hear from some of us in a post or two, with something to enable you to go on. Now, my dear sister, it is time for you to fix upon some scheme for my niece's education; the sending her to France for a couple of years will be your only plan, and no time ought to be lost.

"God bless you, we all love you, and we tell her so.

"I am, my dear Sister, ever most affectionately,
"Jane Burke."

"My dear Sister,

"You are much better to me than I deserve, by your very kind and affectionate uneasiness about my health. If great affection for you and my niece is a merit, which I consider none, that I have for you both, most truly and cordially; you are my only sister, and a good one; why then should I not love you? So God bless you, and make you happy here in your child and friends; and hereafter, as we all hope and wish to be.

"I am anxious about the settlement of my niece in France for a couple of years; I think Mrs. French,* who is a well bred sensible woman, will be the best qualified of any person I know, to direct and advise you upon that head; she has had experience herself, having had her children abroad for education; take her opinion about it, and through her friendship and advice direct yourself. The difficulty will be to get her to France; if you could meet with a sober, discreet clergyman to go with you and her, and when you see her safe lodged, return with you again, that would be the best way to get her over. For as to your staying with her, it would be very uncomfortable to you, not speaking the language of the country; and a disadvantage to my niece, to have any one near her that spoke English. Let her be placed so as to bring her forward as fast as possible; for she has no time to lose at her time of life; and I am sure she will have sense enough to make use of her time, to enable her to come back to her friends, accomplished as they wish, and hope to see her. Perhaps your friends in Cork may be able to put you in a way of going into France. On your return, you can take us in your way. My dear sister, I need not tell you, I hope, how happy I should be to see you, and the pleasure it would give your brothers and nephew, it would indeed make us all very happy. They all join me in love and blessing to you and my niece, whom we love as a child of our own. God for ever bless you.

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* Of Rahasane (or Rasan).

"I am, my dear Sister,
"Ever and ever yours, most affectionately,
"London, May 20, 1783. "JANE BURKE."

On Mr. Burke's visit to Dublin in 1786, he could not find sufficient leisure, it being, as already remarked, a rapid and unpremeditated journey, to visit his sister; and the regret of both father and son on this occasion was expressed in a letter from each.

"MY DEAR SISTER,

"I am now in Dublin with my son; and it is to us both, I assure you, a matter of the most sincere concern, that we should be on the same side of the water with you and my dear niece, without having it in our power to indulge ourselves in the satisfaction which we have long and earnestly wished to embrace you and her. But as the thought of coming hither at all was sudden, so it was very late, and we shall not be able to give ourselves a week more (or, I believe, twelve days at the utmost) for our stay in Dublin. I am obliged to be at the meeting of Parliament, which will be more early than I expected, and Dick must be in Westminster Hall the first day of term. But I hope and trust, that as we have found our way across the Irish Channel, we shall be able to visit you next year at a more early, and to us a more happy season, when we may have the pleasure, which with great mortification to us we must abandon for the present. It will give your sister and your brother Richard the most real satisfaction, as well as to my son and me, to hear that you are well. We left your brother and sister so at Beaconsfield. Frank Kiernan and Mrs. Kiernan desire most cordially to salute you both. We do so from our hearts. My dearest Julia, you have an unprofitable brother, but one who loves you most truly, as you deserve to be loved, who have, under misfortunes, afflictions, and disappointments, kept up your spirits, your courage, and your inimitable good nature. God will one time or other reward those virtues; I have no doubt of it. My best compliments to Mr. Lemon, and thank him for his protection to you. I write this on a supposition that you are at Loughrea, where if you be, you will salute all there who have been kind to you in my name. God Almighty bless and defend you, and believe me ever, my dearest Sister,

"Most affectionately yours,

"EDMUND BURKE.

"College Green, October 12, 1786."

"MY DEAR AUNT,

"I find that, by an accident, the letter my father wrote to you, on our arrival here, did not go off for two or three days after, which is certainly the reason we have not heard from you. We both certainly very much regret that we are so near you, without being able to see you. My father has already told you how unpremeditated our expedition was, and how little time was left us to perform it in, by our several occupations in England. However, I am in hope that, now having once undertaken this journey, I may perhaps attempt it again at a more favourable season. I really long to see my cousin. Captain Nagle* tells me she is so good as to express some regard for me, though I am afraid I have not very much deserved it. The times, however, have not been very favourable, but I hope they will mend. In the mean time let us sometimes hear from you. We are just going to embark again for England in this night's packet. I find, in making up my little accounts here, that I have rather more left than I imagined, viz. 50*l.* which I enclose to you for my cousin, and beg you to make use of it for her as you think fit. I am happy to be able to give her this little testimony of my affection: it is not necessary to mention it in your letters to my father or uncle.

"Believe me, dear Aunt,
"Your affectionate nephew,
"RICHARD BURKE."

Previously to the meeting of Parliament in 1790, the proceedings of the National Assembly of France seeming to rise in the estimation of many persons in this country, drew from Mr. Burke, in private, severe condemnation of the popular feeling; terming it "a gross infatuation," "a tolerance of crime," "an absurd partiality to abstract follies and practical wickedness." Every arrival from France seemed more than to realize his worst anticipations of the evils already perpetrated and impending. When informed of the opinions of Mr. Fox, with whom there had been a material cessation of confidential

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* The present Sir Edmund Nagle.

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intercourse for above three years past, being opposed to his own, he expressed some surprise, and on one occasion said, "Fox has too much good nature not to like any thing that promises benefit to his fellow-men, but in this matter, the severities of his judgment must soon correct the venial errors of his disposition." Further information made him less sanguine in this hope respecting his friend, and the fear of open and direct disagreement induced him to resolve not voluntarily to obtrude his sentiments on the question to Parliament,—not at least until compelled so to do by a sense of duty paramount to all private considerations. Such an occasion very soon called him forth.

In two debates on the army estimates (5th and 9th of February, 1790,) Mr. Fox not only eulogized the Revolution in France generally, but was imprudent enough to specify some points of particular admiration—among others the total defection of the French military from their officers and government, which was, in fact, nothing else but connivance at the worst excesses of the populace. Colonel Phipps, as a military man, and other members, reprobated these sentiments loudly as subversive of all discipline and subordination. Mr. Burke, on the second occasion (9th February), expressing the highest admiration for the talents of his Hon. Friend, and the consequent danger to our own country of giving the sanction of his name to such doctrines, entered into an examination of the state of France, the principles, proceedings, and tendencies, of the Revolution; condemning in bitter terms the incurable ignorance of the leaders, their folly, injustice, and wickedness, their pedantic theories, their abuse of elementary principles; and contrasted it very powerfully with the English Revolution; in which, though some were fond of comparing them, he could find not a single point of resemblance. In England, nothing had been changed but what absolute necessity required. In France, on the contrary, nothing whatever, not even the most necessary or praiseworthy institutions, were preserved. He hated the old despotism of France, and still more he hated the new: it was a plundering, ferocious, bloody, tyrannical democracy, without a single virtue to redeem its numerous crimes; and so far from being, as his hon. friend had inadvertently said, worthy of imitation, he would spend his last breath, and the last drop of his blood—he would quit his best friends, and join his worst enemies, to oppose the least tittle of such a spirit, or such an example, in England.

This speech, which contained no compliment to administration, but on the contrary displayed towards it rather an adverse spirit, was nevertheless received by the members of that body and by a great majority of the House with loud applause. Mr. Pitt was among the most conspicuous; he himself had been incautiously led to express some opinion in favour of the struggle then going on; but, alarmed at its further progress and aspect, he now appeared to wheel round to concur in the sentiments of Mr. Burke. No matter, he said, how they had differed on former points of policy, he felt for him on that occasion the highest gratitude and reverence, and not only the present generation but the latest posterity would revere his name, for the decided part he had that day taken.

The reply of Mr. Fox was mild and conciliatory. He had ever, and did then, entertain the highest veneration for the judgment of his hon. friend; by him he had been instructed more than by all other men and books put together; by him he had been taught to love our constitution; from him he had acquired nearly all his political knowledge; all certainly which was most essential, and which he most valued; "his speech on that day, some arguments and observations excepted, was one of the wisest and most brilliant flights of oratory ever delivered in that House," but, with all these admissions, his opinions on the subject in question continued unshaken.

A rejoinder from Mr. Burke expressed an equally complimentary and conciliatory spirit; and the subject, tender as it evidently was, would have dropped, at least for the present, without further consequences, had not the zeal of Mr. Sheridan, in support of the new opinions,* urged him on to charge his old political associate as a deserter from his former principles—as an assailant of the basis of freedom itself—as the advocate and apologist of despotism—and the libeller of men struggling in the most glorious of all causes. The reply to these unmeasured censures, which were however mingled with some straggling compliments, was calm, but decided. Such terms, Mr. Burke said, might have been spared, if for nothing more than as a sacrifice to the ghost of departed friendship; they were but a repetition of what was said by the reforming clubs and societies with which the hon. gentleman had lately become entangled, and for whose applause he had chosen to sacrifice his friend; though he might in time find that the value of such praise was not worth the price at which it was purchased. Henceforward, he added, they were separated in politics for ever.

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* Like most other men, he in time, as Burke told him he would, changed his opinion of France and French principles. A memorandum of his says—"I like it no better for coming from France—whence all ills come. Altar of liberty—begrimed at once with blood and mire."

This schism threatened such serious consequences to the interests of the party, that attempts were instantly made, and repeated two days afterwards, to heal it by mutual explanation, in presence of the Duke of Portland, Mr. Fox, and others of the chief Members at Burlington House; they met at ten o'clock at night, and debated the matter until three next morning, separating then, as they met, with irreconcileable differences of opinion. The display of talents on both sides is said to have been remarkable. Mr. Burke preserved his temper unruffled, expressing the most amicable sentiments towards the individual, but unfeigned abhorrence of the cause he had advocated; and the impression as to services, powers, and opinions, proved so much in his favour upon the minds of those present, that Mr. Sheridan took offence, and for the remainder of this session and the beginning of the next, ceased from his usual active support in Parliament.

Some personal dislike prevailed between these distinguished men ever afterwards, nor were they perhaps very cordial for a short time before. Mr. Burke, who always complimented his talents, did not for many reasons place equal confidence in his general conduct or principles ; one reason for which was his alleged breach of political faith in intriguing for one of the highest Cabinet situations in the new arrangements consequent on the settling of the Regency, to the exclusion of older and higher claimants. He suspected also, that he was the cause of Mr. Fox withdrawing from him his political confidence ; and there were, it is said, some other private sources of disagreement.

The wit, on the other hand, as he rose high in the private favour of an illustrious personage, and in the esteem of his party, felt some impatience of the preponderance of Mr. Burke, for he possessed little of the humility of the latter in the estimate of his own importance. With much less of steady talent or qualifications for office, he had more than his ambition ; and forgetful of the disciplined subordination of the old Whig school, aimed at vaulting at once to the head of that connexion, over superior talents and longer services, though without private weight in himself, without any strong hold on public confidence, and, as was generally believed, without the diligence or punctuality necessary to conduct public business. After their disagreement, it was remarked, that he always sat silent in private company, when Mr. Burke was a theme of praise with every one else ; in Parliament he spoke of him more than once, "as one for whose talents and personal virtue he entertained the highest esteem, veneration, and regard ;" a compliment which did not prevent him from making frequent pointed and personal attacks on the object of it, but which Mr. Burke rarely deigned to regard. To his councils, also, it has always been said, that the subsequent quarrel of the former with Mr. Fox was owing.

The more zealous friends of Mr. Sheridan, little calculating on the violence of the political storm then in progress in France, and not thinking perhaps that any public question whatever should be permitted to interfere with private connection, began to tax their ingenuity for the cause of the unexpected disclaimer of him by Burke, and discovered at length that it must be *jealousy* of his talents and influence. Among others, Dr. Parr, though an ardent admirer of Burke, was too staunch a Whig and Foxite to see his former pupil, Sheridan, thus unceremoniously thrown off without administering to the self-love of his friends by assigning some such cause. He wrote thus immediately after the quarrel.—

" It is not merely French politics that produced this dispute;—they might have been settled privately. No, no—there is jealousy lurking underneath—jealousy of Mr. Sheridan's eloquence;—jealousy of his popularity;—jealousy of his influence with Mr. Fox;—jealousy perhaps of his connection with the Prince."

A suggestion of this nature usually comes from an aggrieved party, who either does not admit, or does not find it convenient to acknowledge, any other; it is easily made, and precludes a specific reply. In the present instance the accusation was scarcely plausible. It is true, as has been already said, that Mr. Burke believed he had sufficient reasons for disliking the conduct of Sheridan, particularly since the agitation of the Regency question. But it ought likewise to be stated, that Mr. Fox participated fully in the same feelings; and though they were not so openly exhibited by him in the first instance, and afterwards by the exigencies of politics were sometimes shrouded altogether, they did not the less cease to influence the mind of that statesman, as is well known to his friends, even to the end of his life. Mr. Burke therefore, if actuated by displeasure towards the wit, did not stand alone in that feeling. The ostensible leader of the party joined him in it. As to jealousy, in the sense here insinuated, it was so wholly improbable, that either as orators or statesmen, in private character or in public estimation, no one who thoroughly understood the distinguishing merits of both, would venture to place them, on such matters, in comparison.

It is ungracious and irksome to dwell upon the failings of the great, more particularly when they are themselves gone to answer the account at the last and greatest tribunal—nor should a breath of this kind go forth against Sheridan here, except for this charge, which, when alive, he was willing to countenance; and now, when harmless vanity can no longer be gratified by the tale, is imprudently, if not absurdly, repeated.* If any further ground be required for the disunion with Burke, let it be sought where perhaps it will be most certainly found, in the totally dissimilar characters of the men. Their minds were cast in a wholly different mould. Their habits of life as diametrically opposite. Nothing but the emergencies of politics could have kept such persons for twelve months together, united by any tye resembling esteem or sincere friendship, when it is considered that one was religious, moral, temperate, principled, benevolent, laborious in public business, active and diligent in his private duties; the other so remarkably deficient in these and other virtues calculated to fix solid esteem,* that his biographer has scarcely been able to produce a single instance of either. If it be further added, that one was conscientious and punctual in the discharge of his obligations to society, the other reckless to an uncommon degree of the misery and disrepute accruing to himself and others from their constant violation;—that one in the performance of his public functions was unaffected, and, in the estimate of his own importance, commonly unassuming; the other vain and fond of display, sometimes resorting to trick and finesse to increase vulgar admiration of his powers; that one drew upon his purse and his influence on all occasions, to forward the views of unfriended merit, while the other, from his incorrigible negligence, is believed to have disgusted or consigned to obscurity many promising claimants to dramatic literature:—if these and many minor peculiarities be contrasted, there may be found perhaps very ample grounds for jealousy, but proceeding from quite the opposite quarter to that which the preceding passage would insinuate.

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* In his Life, recently published.

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* Mr. Burke frequently expressed his disgust at Sheridan's jests in private society against religion. A favourite subject for ridicule with the wit, was the doctrine of the Trinity; which, having become the subject of his ribaldry more than once at the table of Lord Crewe, gave much offence to his lordship and his amiable lady, who from this and other causes found it advisable to decline giving him further invitations to dinner, long before they deemed it expedient to interdict him their house altogether.

Another part of the same letter gives a lively picture of the agitation occasioned by this dispute among the friends of Opposition—

"The ferment and alarm are universal, and something must be done;—for it is a conflagration in which they must perish, unless it be stopped. All the papers are with Burke,—even the Foxite papers which I have seen. I know his violence, and temper, and obstinacy of opinion, and—but I will not speak out, *for I think him the greatest man upon the earth.* * * * *He is uncorrupt, I know,* but his passions are quite headstrong."

In the midst of the first heated discussions occasioned by this rupture at home, Mr. Burke was taken to task for his doctrines on the same subject, from a more distant quarter, by a gentleman with whom, though their acquaintance was not of long standing, he had formed some degree of intimacy.

Mr. or Captain, Mercer, who in venturing to argue the question only flourished the sword of Harlequin against the armour of Achilles, was a man who, having successfully accomplished the common business of life, that of making money, believed himself also qualified to make, or at least to judge of and to explain, the laws which influence and bind together a great nation. The son of a small trader in the north of Ireland who had little to give him but a common education, he found himself early in life thrown upon his own resources; and, having figured as an under clerk in a counting-house in Dublin and Liverpool, a young sailor in a merchant-ship, and a captain of a West Indiaman, he at length turned his attention to the East Indies. Here, as captain and general merchant, he accumulated in 20 years, without any imputation on his integrity, a fortune of more than 60,000*l.*, with which, and the esteem of those who knew him, among whom was Lord Macartney, at that time Governor of Madras, he returned in 1787, to spend the remainder of his days in ease and honour in his native place of Newry.

He united to a vigorous understanding a mind disposed to the performance of good, and an ardour of character which carried him forward to act with energy, and sturdily to maintain such sentiments as he had formed. He possessed a taste for information; but, like all self-educated men, he had read much rather than well; and having jumbled together the good and the bad without much discrimination, had not found time in his active intercourse with the world to set his mind to work to analyze the mass thus collected, and to detach the gold from the dross. He was, as such persons usually are, opiniated; for knowledge, with them, beginning only to flow in at a later period of life than usual, the understanding becomes too rigid and too tenacious of its consequence, easily to part with acquisitions so recently made. His views, on subjects with which he had an opportunity of becoming personally acquainted, were frequently original and just; while on those picked up from chance rather than systematic instruction—from prejudice rather than close inquiry—they were as often common-place and erroneous. The society with which he had chiefly mingled, had not materially tended to correct the original defects under which he laboured. But of his spirit and general cast of mind, a favourable opinion will be formed from the following passage engraved on a plate of gold, hung up originally in the cabin of the ship he commanded in India, and afterwards transferred to the mantleshelf of his parlour in Arno's Vale.

> "Hail! Independence; hail! Heav'n's next best gift
> To that of life, and an immortal soul,
> The life of life! that to the banquet high,
> And sober meal, gives taste."—

It would not have been necessary to advert so particularly to this gentleman, except as he formed a fair specimen of that numerous class of persons who first expressed their astonishment at the opinions of Mr. Burke, and then simultaneously rushed to attack them, though totally disqualified by education, habits of life, or talents, to discuss, much less to solve, the abstruse political problems they involved. The following is his first letter on the subject to his illustrious acquaintance; and the reader will be amused, if he can repress his astonishment, at the coolness with which the writer talks of subverting a government,—as if it were an affair of little more consequence than pulling down a cow-shed, and rebuilding it in the newest fashion at the pleasure of the owner—a feeling indeed vulgar and pernicious, but among a certain class of society, too general.—It will be observed there is little attempt at reasoning; the communication, however, deserves insertion for the reply it drew forth.

"DEAR SIR,

"My veneration for your character was great before I had the honour of your personal acquaintance, and it was not diminished when I had the pleasure of seeing and conversing with you. I had long considered you the determined enemy of tyranny and oppression of every kind—the friend of man—and of every thing which might promote his felicity.

" It was therefore with extreme surprise that I read in my English newspaper of last post, the imputation to you of sentiments exceedingly inimical to what is thought by many a most glorious revolution in France.

" The newspaper represents you as complaining, that the National Assembly had totally subverted their ancient form of government, and that they had also subverted their church.

" To complain of the subversion of a government implies a belief of its having been a good one. But I cannot persuade myself to think that such was your opinion of the defunct government of France. Every body has read, more or less, of the late French government; but every one has not been in France as I have been, to see how it operated to the distress and vexation of the people. I saw so much of this, that the word *government* never had a place in my mind when I considered the condition of the French people. In a word I saw nothing but the most despotic tyranny, the subversion of which would, as I thought, give the greatest pleasure to every sincere lover of civil liberty, of whatever nation he might be.

" With respect to the subversion of the church, it does not appear that any change in its doctrine has been attempted. In its discipline there may be some alterations, as it is probable the National Assembly will enlarge those exemptions from the jurisdiction of the Court of Rome which it formerly enjoyed, and which were called the privileges of the Gallican Church. For the rest—if to take from pampered and luxurious prelates a part of those sumptuous livings which were accumulated in the times of ignorance and superstition, and to provide for the more comfortable subsistence of parish priests, be the subversion of a church, millions of good men and good Christians will heartily wish (for the honour of true religion distinct from pageantry and hypocrisy) that all such may in this manner be speedily subverted.

"Suffer a plain independent man to make some further observations.

"Power over our fellow-men, by whatever means it has been acquired—whether by fraud, or force, or thoughtless acquiescence—seems to be considered by its possessor as his dearest birth-right. He would lose his right hand or even his life, rather than part with a jot or tittle of it. He extends it from object to object until the yoke becomes too heavy and too galling to be longer borne. And by what means are the aggrieved to get rid of it? Not by the most reasonable and eloquent representations —not by the most humble and abject intercessions; for both would be equally scouted and laughed to scorn—not by an appeal to the laws of the country, for the laws were made under the influence of the power complained of, and with a view to its perpetuation. There is, therefore, no remedy to be found but in what is called a revolution; the intention of which being either to curtail, or annul, or place in other hands, the powers which be, it cannot be effected without some convulsion; nor is it possible so to order the matter, but in some cases many individuals may suffer injury and outrage; and this, as far as it goes, is to be lamented. But if it ends in freedom, in the deliverance of a nation from the despotism of one man, *no price can be thought too dear to pay for it.*

"I flatter myself, my dear Sir, that you do not differ essentially from the sentiments expressed in this letter. I am persuaded you feel, and will always acknowledge, that there cannot be a government fit for rational beings to live under and submit to, but where the legislative part of it is chiefly composed of the representatives of the bulk of the people, freely and unbiassedly elected. The new French government promises to be such a one; and notwithstanding what newspapers report to the contrary, I will not take to myself the mortification of supposing that my judgment of points of high and essential importance to the happiness of mankind, differs exceedingly from the opinions of a man celebrated for the clearness of his head, and the philanthropy of his heart.

"Perhaps you will cheer me with an assurance that we do not differ widely; than which nothing would be a more exhilirating cordial to one, who has the honour to be, with every possible respect, your most faithful and humble servant,

"THOMAS MERCER.

"Arno's Vale, near Newry, Ireland,
19th February, 1790."

The following was the reply:

To Thomas Mercer, Esq.

"Dear Sir,

"The speedy answer I return to your letter, I hope will convince you of the high value I set upon the regard you are so good to express for me, and the obliging trouble which you take to inform my judgment upon matters in which we are all very deeply concerned. I think perfectly well of your heart and your principles, and of the strength of your natural understanding, which, according to your opportunities, you have not been wanting in pains to improve.

"If you are mistaken, it is perhaps owing to the impression almost inevitably made by the various careless conversations which we are engaged in through life; conversations in which those who propagate their doctrines have not been called upon for much reflection concerning their end and tendency; and in which those who imperceptibly imbibe the doctrines taught, are not required, by a particular duty, very closely to examine them, or to act from the impressions they receive. I am obliged to *act*, and am therefore bound to call my principles and sentiments to a strict account. As far as my share of a public trust goes, I am in *trust* religiously to maintain the rights and properties of all descriptions of people in the possession which legally they hold; and in the *rule* by which alone they can be legally secure in any possession. I do not find myself at liberty either as a man, or as a trustee for men, to take a *vested* property from one man and to give it to another, because *I* think that the portion of one is too great, and that of another too small. From my first juvenile rudiments of speculative study to the grey hairs of my present experience, I have never learned any thing else. I can never be taught any thing else by *reason;* and when *force* comes, I shall consider whether I am to submit to it, or how I am to resist it. This I am sure of, that an early guard against the manifest tendency of a contrary doctrine, is the only way by which those who love order can be prepared to resist such force.

"The calling men by the names of 'pampered and luxurious prelates,' &c. is in you no more than a mark of your dislike to intemperance and idle expence; but in others it is used for other puposes. It is often used to extinguish the sense of justice in our minds, and the natural feelings of humanity in our bosoms. Such language does not mitigate the cruel effects of reducing men of opulent condition, and their innumerable dependents, to the last distress. If I were to adopt the plan of a spoliatory reformation, I should probably employ such language; but it would aggravate instead of extenuating my guilt in overturning the sacred principles of property.

"Sir, I say that church and state, and human society too, for which church and state were made, are subverted by such doctrines, joined to such practices, as leave no foundation for property in *long possessions*. My dear Captain Mercer, it is not my calling the use you make of your plate in your house, either of dwelling or of prayer, 'pageantry and hypocrisy,' that can justify me in taking from you your own property, and your own liberty to use your own property according to your own ideas of ornament. When you find me attempting to break into your house to take your plate, under any pretence whatsoever, but most of all under pretence of purity of religion and Christian charity, shoot me for a robber and an hypocrite, as in that case I shall certainly be. The 'true Christian Religion' never taught me any such practices; nor did the religion of my nature, nor any religion, nor any law.

"Let those who never abstained from a full meal, and as much wine as they could swallow, for a single day of their whole lives, satirize 'luxurious and pampered prelates' if they will. Let them abuse such prelates, and such lords, and such squires, provided it be only to correct their vices. I care not much about the language of this moral satire, if they go no further than satire. But there are occasions when the language of Falstaff reproaching the Londoners, whom he robbed in their way to Canterbury, with their gorbellies and their city luxury, is not so becoming.

"It is not by calling the landed estates, possessed by old *prescriptive rights,* the 'accumulations of ignorance and superstition,' that can support me in shaking that grand title, which supersedes all other title, and which all my studies of general jurisprudence have taught me to consider as one principal cause of the formation of states; I mean the ascertaining and securing *prescription.* But these are donations made in 'ages of ignorance and superstition.' Be it so. It proves that these donations were made long ago; and this is *prescription;* and this gives right and title.*

"It is possible that many estates about you were originally obtained by arms, that is, by violence, a thing almost as bad as superstition, and not much short of ignorance: but it is *old violence;* and that which might be wrong in the beginning, is consecrated by time, and becomes lawful. This may be superstition in me, and ignorance; but I had rather remain in ignorance and superstition, than be enlightened and purified out of the first principles of law and natural justice.

"I never will suffer you, if I can help it, to be deprived of the well-earned fruits of your industry, because others may want your fortune more than you do, and may have laboured, and do now labour, in vain, to acquire even a subsistence. Nor, on the contrary, if success had less smiled on your endeavours, and you had come home insolvent, would I take from any 'pampered and luxurious lord' in your neighbourhood one acre of his land, or one spoon from his side-board, to compensate your losses, though incurred (as they would have been incurred) in the course of a well-spent, virtuous, and industrious life. God is the distributor of his own blessings. I will not impiously attempt to usurp his throne, but will keep according to the subordinate place and trust in which he has stationed me, to secure the order of property which I find established in my country. No guiltless man has ever been, nor ever will, I trust, be able to say with truth, that he has been obliged to retrench a dish at his table for any reformations of mine.

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* The writer of Junius's Letters, in one of his private communications to Wilkes (18th September, 1771), has a passage so similar in spirit to this as to deserve notice; it is in defence of close boroughs.—"You ask me from whence did the right (of parliamentary representation in small places) originate, and for what purpose was it granted? I do not see the tendency of these questions, but I answer them without scruple: 'In general it arose from the King's writs, and it was granted with a view to balance the powers of the nobility, and to obtain aids from the people.' But without looking back to an obscure antiquity from which no certain information can be collected, you will find that the laws of England have much greater regard to *possession* (of a certain length) *than to any other title whatsoever;* and that in every kind of property which savours of the *reality, this doctrine is most wisely the basis of our English jurisprudence.*"

" You pay me the compliment to suppose me a foe to tyranny and oppression, and you are, therefore, surprised at the sentiments I have lately delivered in Parliament. I am that determined foe to tyranny, or I greatly deceive myself in my character; and I am sure I am an ideot in my conduct. It is because I am, and mean to continue so, that I abominate the example of France for this country. I know that tyranny seldom attacks the poor, never in the first instance. They are not its proper prey. It falls on the wealthy and the great, whom by rendering objects of envy, and otherwise obnoxious to the multitude, they may more easily destroy; and when they are destroyed, that multitude which was led to that ill-work by the arts of bad men, is itself undone for ever.

" I hate tyranny, at least I think so; but I hate it most of all where most are concerned in it. The tyranny of a multitude is a multiplied tyranny. If, as society is constituted in these large countries of

France and England, full of unequal property, I must make my choice (which God avert!) between the despotism of a single person, or of the many, my election is made. As much injustice and tyranny has been practised in a few months by a French democracy, as in all the arbitrary monarchies in Europe in the forty years of my observation. I speak of public glaring acts of tyranny; I say nothing of the common effects of old abusive governments, because I do not know that as bad may not be found in the new.

"This democracy begins very ill; and I feel no security, that what has been rapacious and bloody at its commencement, will be mild and protecting in its final settlement. They cannot, indeed, in future rob so much, because they have left little that can be taken. I go to the full length of my principle. I should think the government of the deposed King of France, or of the late King of Prussia, or the present Emperor, or the present Czarina, none of them perhaps perfectly good people, to be far better than the government of twenty-four millions of men, *all as good as you*, and I do not know any body better; supposing that those twenty-four millions would be subject, as infallibly they would, to the same unrestrained, though virtuous impulses; because it is plain that their majority would think every thing justified by their warm good intentions—they would heat one another by their common zeal—counsel and advice would be lost upon them—they would not listen to temperate individuals, and they would be less capable, infinitely, of moderation than the most heady of those princes.

"What have I to do with France, but as the common interest of humanity, and its example to this country, engages me? I know France, by observation and inquiry, pretty tolerably for a stranger; and I am not a man to fall in love with the faults or follies of the old or new government. You reason as if I were running a parallel between its former abusive government and the present tyranny. What had all this to do with the opinions I delivered in Parliament, which ran a parallel between *the liberty they might have had* and *this frantic delusion*. This is the way by which you blind and deceive yourself, and beat the air in your argument with me. Why do you instruct me on a state of the case which has no existence? You know how to reason very well. What most of the newspapers make me say, I know not, nor do I much care. I do not think, however, they have thus stated me. There is a very fair *abstract* of my speech* printed in a little pamphlet, which I would send you if it were worth putting you to the expense.

"To discuss the affairs of France and its revolution would require a volume, perhaps many volumes. Your general reflections about revolutions may be right or wrong; they conclude nothing. I do not find myself disposed to controvert them, for I do not think they apply to the present affairs, nay I am sure they do not. I conceive you have got very imperfect accounts of these transactions. I believe I am much more exactly informed of them.

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* This was by his own authority, and has now a place in his Works.

"I am sorry, indeed, to find that our opinions do differ essentially, fundamentally, and are at the utmost possible distance from each other, if I understand you or myself clearly on this subject. Your freedom is far from displeasing to me; I love it; for I always wish to know the full of what is in the mind of the friend I converse with. I give you mine as freely; and I hope I shall offend you as little as you do me.

"I shall have no objection to your showing my letter to as many as you please. I have no secrets with regard to the public. I have never shrunk from obloquy; and I have never courted popular applause. If I have met with any share of it, '*non recepi sed rapui*.' No difference of opinion, however, shall hinder me from cultivating your friendship, while you permit me to do so. I have not written this to discuss these matters in a prolonged controversy (I wish we may never say more about them), but to comply with your commands, which ever shall have due weight with me.

"I am most respectfully,
"And most affectionately yours,
"London, Feb. 26, 1790. "EDMUND BURKE."

His correspondent, however, possessed too much pugnacity, or too good an opinion of himself, to submit to be written down by any pen however celebrated, and therefore, instead of attending to the wish expressed in the latter part of the preceding letter, he drew up a rejoinder in support of his opinions, which is much too long for insertion here. It abounds, as may be supposed, in the fundamental errors and common-place arguments of superficial readers and thinkers. He lays claim indeed to be "not a total stranger to the subject," "not a careless or inattentive observer," as had been insinuated; and further goes on to say, that a knowledge of such matters is "attainable by almost every understanding." In proof, no doubt, of the latter assertion, he boldly attempts to maintain, that the offices and revenues of the church may be carved out, fashioned, and appropriated at any time and all times, entirely at the pleasure of the state; that the whole of its income and property belong of right to the civil power as the original owner; that vested rights and legal possession do not apply to them in the same manner as to private property; that the seizure of the whole by the state would be "no infringement on the principles of reason, or justice, or equity;" and that the union of church and state "are, ('I beg,' says the writer, with a passing dash of modesty, 'you will bear with my great freedom') little else than an alliance, or to speak more properly, a combination, between superstition and tyranny." The conduct of monarchs, he contends, "is no more sacred by prescription than the property of the church;" "the respected word *Government* ought not to be applied to such diabolical conspiracies against the improvement, protection, and happiness of mankind," "as the Russian and Prussian schemes of domination" (meaning their governments); and as an appropriate finish to this effusion of liberal sentiments and patriotic wisdom and moderation, thinks the French nation were right in not repairing or amending the old national institutions; "they attempted an entirely new form of government, and I most sincerely wish they will be able to *perfect a model constitution for all nations.*"

Harmless as such absurdities as these would have been at any other time, Mr. Burke saw some cause for disquiet now, when he found them reiterated from innumerable quarters by many honest and well meaning men, several of them, as in this instance, his personal friends—by men of some weight from their property, and some reputation for sense and cleverness from their success in life, but all very injudicious and mistaken politicians. Unimportant therefore as this correspondence was in other respects, it confirmed him in the design to endeavour to undeceive such men, by examining the subject in detail, in a work expressly fitted for the public eye. There is no doubt also, that the remarks of this correspondent on ecclesiastical matters, gave birth, or at least greater length, to the defence contained in that work of church establishments.

The next avowed difference of opinion of Mr. Burke with Opposition was on the repeal of the Corporation and Test Acts, moved by Mr. Fox on the 2d of March; but it seemed rather an opposition as to times and circumstances, than from principle ; and in the course of it he warmly defended his right honourable friend, the mover, from insinuations thrown out against his enterprising character, in case of coming into power, by Mr. Pitt. ‘ He was surprised that the Chancellor of the Exchequer should think ill of a friend of the dissenters,—more especially when it was remembered that a former minister of this country—a man of brilliant talents and acknowledged abilities—who had directed the government with great glory to its national character, and great safety to the constitution in church and state—a man whom he believed the right honourable gentleman would not think lightly of—he meant the Earl of Chatham—had been considered an especial protector of the dissenters. That Noble Lord had gone so far as to tell the House of Peers, in reply to an accusation of Dr. Drummond, Archbishop of York, of the pastors of the dissenters, being " men of close ambition." " They are so, my Lords; and their ambition is to keep close to the college of fishermen, not of cardinals; to the doctrine of inspired apostles, not to the degrees of interested and aspiring bishops. They contend for a spiritual creed and spiritual worship. We have a Calvinistic creed, a popish liturgy, and an Arminian clergy." Thus his lordship selected the worst names of other religions to apply to our church and liturgy.

' Had the present question, he continued, been brought on ten years sooner, he himself would have felt bound to vote in the affirmative; but such doubts had since arisen in his mind, that when the same thing was moved in 1787 and 1789 (by Mr. Beaufoy), extremely unwilling to vote against it, yet not satisfied that he was right in voting for it, he had quitted the House without voting at all. At the present moment, he thought the repeal more particularly inexpedient—there was a wild spirit of innovation abroad which required not indulgence but restraint—for the avowed leaders of the dissenters, alluding to Drs. Price, Priestley, Kippis, Towers, and others, had, in their speeches, writings, resolutions, and even catechisms and sermons, given countenance not merely to the worst portion of the political spirit of the day, but some of them had openly threatened a direct attack upon the church establishment.

'Such, he firmly believed, was not the intention of the respectable body with which those persons were connected: he had ever entertained for that body the highest respect and esteem, and among its members were some of his best friends; but while they permitted such persons to take the lead in their affairs, they became in the general opinion, and in fact, responsible in some degree for, and identified with, such sentiments. After all, as some test would probably be required by the country if these acts were repealed, he had brought the draught of one in his pocket;—the present he had always thought a bad and insufficient test for the end it was meant to accomplish; it was a great abuse of the sacramental rite—a rite infinitely too sacred and too solemn to be prostituted, as it often was, for very trivial purposes.'——Whatever was the cause—whether from the effect of this speech, which embraced many details of the hostile spirit of dissenters to the church, or the exertions of Mr. Pitt, or the general alarm in the country, this question, that in the preceding session received a faint negative from no more than 20, was now smothered by a majority of 189.

In the general abuse, which, whether right or wrong and at all hazards, the favourers of French politics thought it their duty soon afterwards to pour upon Mr. Burke, many pages were written to prove him guilty of gross inconsistency in thus opposing a measure which he had formerly supported with all his powers. It is likewise remarkable that nearly as many pages were employed to defend him from this charge, on the ground that the dissenters of 1790 being busy meddling politicians, whose aim was the possession of political power rather than religious freedom, he was justified in denying to them what he had wished to concede to the conscientious body who solicited his support in 1772.

This attack, like many others made upon him, arose from misinformation; and the defence therefore though well-meant was unnecessary. He did *not* advocate the repeal of the test act in 1772, for the simple reason that no such repeal was proposed. The facts of the matter were these. At the period in question the dissenting ministers applied for an enlargement of the toleration act, or for a repeal of the clause which required subscription to the articles as a condition of enjoying the benefits of that act. This claim—and this alone—he supported; as he continued to do in 1773, and again in 1779 when it was conceded; but at neither of these periods was there an application made for the repeal of the test act.

The other chief measures in which he took part were in voting an increase of income to the Speaker of the House of Commons, paying, in the course of his speech, several compliments to Mr. Addington, who then filled the chair, for his "impartiality, attention, and diligence, which had not only answered the expectations of his own friends, but satisfied the House in general;" on the claim of the Duke of Athol for certain rights in the Isle of Man, which he stigmatized as a job, and which from the sense of the House appearing against it, was put off; on the quarrel with Spain respecting Nootka Sound, his opinion being strongly in favour of accommodation, for that "as we never ought to go to war for a profitable wrong, so we ought never to go to war for an unprofitable right; and therefore he hoped that the intended armament would be considered not as a measure calculated to terminate the war happily, but to enable Ministers to carry on the negociation vigorously;" on a censure passed on Major Scott for a libel on the House; and on two resolutions of the managers of the impeachment moved by himself, which were to persevere in the trial generally; while, for the sake of expedition in deciding it, they were to select only the more important charges for adjudication.

In addition to these exertions, he opposed a motion by Mr. Flood for parliamentary reform, which produced a very candid confession from Mr. Fox, that though *he* thought such a measure advisable, the country at large did not seem to be of the same opinion. A jest of Burke on this question, widely disseminated in private society, threw much ridicule upon the enthusiasts in this cause. A new party of Reformers, he said, had arisen still more pure in their creed than the rest, who deemed annual parliaments not sufficiently frequent, and quoted, in support of their doctrine, the latter words of the Statute of Edward III., that "a parliament shall be holden every year once and *more often if need be.*" How to designate these gentlemen from their less orthodox associates he knew not, except indeed their tenets furnished the hint, and they be known as the *Oftener-if-need-be's!*

A proposition, through the medium of some common friends, was made to Mr. Burke about this period, by his former acquaintance Gerrard Hamilton, to renew that intimacy which had so long suffered estrangement, but this offer he declined. He had told Mr. Flood at the time, there was "an eternal separation" between them,—that "he would not keep a memorial of such a person about him," and possibly the recollection of some random sarcasms, which Hamilton, though he always did full justice to his uncommon powers, had occasionally let off against his party and himself, might have tended to make him keep his word. The reply made to the communication was, that without entertaining the slightest resentful or unfriendly feeling toward Mr. Hamilton, there were several circumstances in their connexion and separation, and long subsequent alienation, which would prevent his enjoying the same pleasure as formerly in his society, and therefore a renewal of intimacy might not be very satisfactory to either. It is said, that had Lord Temple ever become Minister, it was his intention to make Mr. Hamilton his Chancellor of the Exchequer; and it must ever be considered an enigma, that any one looking forward to such a post, should not have made himself of more importance in Parliament than he did, by frequently speaking. No explanation has ever been given of his taciturnity, except the illiberal one be surmised, that he already enjoyed in a rich sinecure all the substantial return he could expect for much talking.

CHAPTER II.

Publication of Reflections on the Revolution in France.—Testimonies in its favour.—Reply of Burke to the Universities of Dublin and Oxford, and to Mr. Cumberland.—Thomas Paine.—Character of Henry IV. of France.—Letter to a Member of the National Assembly.—Rupture with Mr. Fox.—Jury Bill of 1791.—Parliamentary business.—Anecdotes.

FROM the moment of the rupture with Mr. Sheridan, Mr. Burke, perceiving that his opinions on the French Revolution were very generally misunderstood or misrepresented, and willing also to state them more fully and forcibly to the world than even parliamentary speaking would allow, as well as to enable the reflecting part of mankind to think more justly, as he believed, of the event itself, decided to call in the aid of the press.

This task was begun and carried on during the summer with his wonted ardour and disregard of labour, and, alluding to the anxious emotions to which it gave rise, he says, in a letter to Lord Charlemont, of the 25th May, "I have been at once much occupied and much agitated with my employment." The elements of the work, however, had been for some months floating in his mind, and in fact no inconsiderable portion of it, or at least matter nearly similar, were already in various forms committed to paper. These were collected, re-written, enlarged, amended, and re-modelled to the form in which he had determined to publish—that of a letter to the French gentleman who had before consulted him on the subject. The whole was polished with extraordinary care, more than a dozen of proofs being worked off and destroyed according to Dodsley's account, before he could please himself; it was set off with every attraction of the highest style of eloquence of which the English language is susceptible, and the most vivid and striking imagery in the whole compass of English prose; it was impressed on the judgment by acute reasoning, by great penetration into the motives of human action, by maxims of the most sound and practical wisdom; by expositions of the impracticable nature of the new government, and the evil designs of its framers; nothing, indeed, which his genius, his knowledge, or his observation could supply, was omitted to give popularity to the "Reflections on the Revolution in France."

In the beginning of November, 1790, this celebrated work made its appearance, and a French translation, by his friend M. Dupont, an advocate formerly in Paris, quickly spread its reputation over all Europe. The publication proved one of the remarkable events of the year, perhaps of the century; for it may be doubted whether any previous political production ever excited so much attention, so much discussion, so much praise from one party, so much animadversion from another, but ultimately, among the great majority of persons, such general conviction of the correctness of his views, as to have fully succeeded in turning the stream of public opinion to the direction he wished, from the channel in which it had hitherto flowed. The circulation of the book corresponded with its fame; within the first year about 19,000 copies were sold in England, and about 13,000 in France; the whole number sold of English copies is estimated at more than 30,000—and this at a time when there was not a third of the demand for books of any kind that there is at present;—and some experienced booksellers have said that the sale was greater than any preceding book whatever of the same price. The interest which it excited did not cease with the moment, for it was sought after then and since by persons little prone to political discussion, for the wisdom of the lessons it taught; by many for its literary beauties; by many in order to retrace the outline of fearful and extraordinary events there in great measure foretold; and it will ever be a source of deep interest to the practical statesman, and of unfeigned admiration to the man of taste and genius.

A laboured analysis of this or any other of the more celebrated writings of this eloquent man, is not intended here, rather perhaps from want of inclination in the writer than from want of materials, which would add more certainly to the size of the present work than perhaps to the edification of the reader. In the instance before us it is particularly unnecessary. Almost every man who pretends to read at all, has read it. To him who has, such a disquisition would be at best meagre and unsatisfactory. To him who has not, it would impart no means of justly appreciating the force and beauty of the original; for of Burke it has been said, as Johnson remarked of Shakspeare, that to attempt to recommend him by select extracts would be but to follow the example of the pedant in Hierocles, who, when he offered his house to sale, carried a brick in his pocket as a specimen. Many of the passages in it form matter of continual quotation for their eloquence; and few of its pages but contain something profound in remark, novel in thought, and ingenious and beautiful in illustration. The peroration, though in general but little noticed, is not the least striking passage; nor will the prophetic remark on the vicissitudes likely to be experienced in the forms of the new government, be lightly passed over by the reader.

"I have told you candidly," he says to his correspondent, "my sentiments. I think they are not likely to alter your's. I do not know that they ought. You are young; you cannot guide, but must follow the fortune of your country. But hereafter they may be of some use to you, *in some future form which your commonwealth may take. In the present it can hardly remain; but before its final settlement it may be obliged to pass, as one of our poets says, 'through great varieties of untried being,' and in all its transmigrations to be purified by fire and blood.*

"I have little to recommend my opinions but long observation and much impartiality. They come from one who has been no tool of power, no flatterer of greatness; and who in his last acts does not wish to belie the tenour of his life. They come from one almost the whole of whose public exertion has been a struggle for the liberty of others; from one in whose breast no anger durable or vehement has ever been kindled, but by what he considered as tyranny; and who snatches from his share in the endeavours which are used by good men to discredit opulent oppression,* the hours he has employed on your affairs; and who in so doing persuades himself he has not departed from his usual office: they come from one who desires honours, distinctions, and emoluments, but little; and who expects them not at all; who has no contempt for fame, and no fear of obloquy; who shuns contention though he will hazard an opinion: from one who wishes to preserve consistency; but who would preserve consistency by varying his means to secure the unity of his end; and when the equipoise of the vessel in which he sails may be endangered by overloading it upon one side, is desirous of carrying the small weight of his reasons to that which may preserve its equipoise."†

The testimonies of approval which flowed in upon the writer from every quarter soon after the appearance of his book, evinced not merely the admiration of his eloquence and literary talents; but his power over the question in discussion: no writer probably was ever before so complimented.

The Sovereigns subsequently assembled at Pilnitz, particularly the Emperor of Germany, transmitted to him through one of his Ministers, with whom Mr. Burke had some future correspondence, a tribute of decided approbation. The French Princes did the same through his son and Mons. Cazales. Catherine of Russia directed her Embassador, Count de Worowzow, to communicate in her name sentiments of a similar nature. His late Majesty, George III., not only gave the work an attentive perusal, but had a number of copies elegantly bound, which he distributed among his friends with the remark, that it was "a book which every gentleman ought to read." Stanislaus, the unfortunate King of Poland, to whom Mr. Burke was personally known, sent him his likeness on a gold medal, with a letter written in English, deeming that language, as he said, the most copious and energetic to convey the high sense which he entertained of his patriotism and talents.

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* In allusion to the prosecution of Mr. Hastings.

† To preserve the euphony of the last sentence, the completeness of the nautical metaphor, and to save the repetition of the word *equipoise* which exists in the same sentence, a sailor would have finished it thus,—" which may preserve it upon an even keel."

The reply of the orator stated in expressive terms that so high a mark of esteem might be supposed to awaken his vanity, but it tended rather to excite his veneration and esteem for the character of a Prince whom he had long admired. He possessed, he said, no cabinet of medals, but had he the richest in the universe, he was persuaded he would be at a loss in what illustrious series to place that of his Majesty:—it must be placed the first of a new one: —he had a son, and happy would it be for that son if he lived to be able to add a second to it. He praised the revolution in Poland, the origin and progress of which he ascribed to the King; "you," said he, "that may be truly called the father, and not the proprietor of your people."

The praises of the learned, however, preceded, in the order of time, the approval of the great. The first tribute of this kind which he received from a public body, came very appropriately, as the nurse of his genius, from Trinity College, Dublin. In December 1790, on a motion of the Provost (the head of the University) the honorary degree of LL.D. was unanimously conferred upon him in full convocation, and an address afterwards presented in a gold box, to express their sense of his services —" as the powerful advocate of the constitution, the friend of public order, virtue, and the happiness of mankind; and in testimony of the high respect entertained by the University for the various endowments of his capacious mind, and for his superior talents and abilities." The following was his reply, addressed to the Provost.

" My dear Sir,

" I find it difficult indeed to make a proper acknowledgment to you for the very flattering mark I received of your continued friendship and partiality to me in your letter of the 13th of this month. This proof of your private friendship is as valuable to me as the public distinction which I owe to your motion, and which comes through your hands, though you will believe that I feel the approbation of the University as one of the greatest honours which could be conferred upon me. The University is indeed highly generous in accepting with so much indulgence the produce of its own gifts. I am infinitely happy that that learned body has been pleased to recognize in the piece it condescends to favour, the unaltered subsistence of those principles of liberty and morality along with some faint remains of that taste of composition, which are infused and have always been infused together, into the minds of those who have the happiness to be instructed by it.

"I received this most honourable testimony of your approbation just as I was going to the House of Commons yesterday to recommence my tenth year's warfare against the most dangerous enemy to the justice, honour, laws, morals, and constitution of this country by which they have ever been attacked: I mean the corruption which has come upon us from the East, and in which I act with every thing respectable in every party in the House. Though I had been for some days ill in health, and not very full of spirits, your letter enabled me to go through a long and fatiguing day, if not with strength, at least with resolution. I thought that the university which had bred me, called upon me, not to disgrace in my last stage, the lessons she had taught me in the early period of my life; and I hope, old as I am, I shall prove as docile to her lessons as when I was subject to her discipline.

"Excuse my not saying all that my heart would dictate on this occasion to you and the gentlemen of the university; but the consequences of a late day disable, and I hope will excuse me. But believe me, when I assure you that I am ever, with the most perfect respect and affection,

"My dear Sir,
"Your most obliged and faithful humble servant,
"EDMUND BURKE.

"Duke Street, St. James's,
"Dec. 18, 1790."

An address from the resident graduates of Oxford was about the same time, presented to him through

Mr. Windham,* which spoke the sentiments of nearly the whole of the university, though a temporary cabal or misunderstanding among the heads of houses, prevented the diploma degree of LL.D. being conferred upon a writer whose philosophical essay on the Sublime and Beautiful, forms a book of reference connected with the education of youth in their establishment, and whose eloquence in this instance tended to preserve and honour that establishment itself. The reply to Mr. Windham was as follows :—

"My dear Sir,

"The valuable present I received from the resident graduates in the university of Oxford, becomes doubly acceptable in passing through your hands. Gentlemen so eminent for science, erudition, and virtue, and who possess the uncommon art of doing kind things in the kindest manner, would naturally choose a person qualified like themselves to convey their favours and distinctions to those whom they are inclined to honour. Be pleased to assure those

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* "To the Right Honourable Edmund Burke.

"We whose names are hereunto subscribed, resident graduates in the University of Oxford, request you to accept this respectful declaration of our sentiments, as a tribute which we are desirous of paying to splendid talents employed in the advancement of public good. We think it fit and becoming the friends of our church and state to avow openly their obligations to those who distinguish themselves in the support of our approved establishments; and we judge it to be our especial duty to do this in seasons peculiarly marked by a spirit of rash and dangerous innovation.

"As members of an university whose institutions embrace every useful and ornamental part of learning, we should esteem our-learned gentlemen that I am beyond measure happy in finding my well-meant endeavours well received by them; and I think my satisfaction does not arise from motives merely selfish, because their declared approbation must be of the greatest importance in giving an effect (which, without that sanction, might well be wanting) to an humble attempt in favour of the cause of freedom, virtue, and order, united.

"This cause it is our common wish and our common interest to maintain; and it can hardly be maintained without securing on a solid foundation, and preserving in an uncorrupted purity, the noble establishments which the wisdom of our ancestors has formed for giving permanency to those blessings which they have left to us as our best inheritance.

"We have all a concern in maintaining them all: but if all those who are more particularly engaged in some of those establishments, and who have a peculiar trust in maintaining them, were wholly to decline all marks of their concurrence in opinion, it might give occasion to malicious people to suggest doubts, whether the representation I had given was really expressive of the sentiments of the people on

selves justified in making this address, if we had only to offer you our thanks for the valuable accession which the stock of our national literature has received by the publication of your important 'Reflections.' But we have higher objects of consideration, and nobler motives to gratitude: we are persuaded that we consult the real and permanent interests of this place, when we acknowledge the eminent service rendered both to our civil and religious constitution by your able and disinterested vindication of their true principles; and we obey the yet more sacred obligation to promote the cause of religion and morality, when we give this proof that we honour the advocate by whom they are so eloquently and effectually defended.

those subjects. I am obliged to those gentlemen for having removed the ground of those doubts.

"I have the honour to be, &c. &c. &c.

"EDMUND BURKE."

The Archbishop of Aix, and others of the dignified clergy of France, wrote several letters to him expressive of their obligations and acknowledgments "that the first orator of England had become their defender." Nearly all the superior members of our own church, the great body of the nobility, the most eminent statesmen with a few exceptions, and several of the chief men of letters, pronounced him the saviour not merely of the English but of all established governments.

One of those who from his heart, principles, and taste, he thought best qualified to form an opinion, was Sir Joshua Reynolds; to him therefore the work was submitted in manuscript, and it received his unqualified approval. Gibbon proved particularly warm in his applause. "I thirst," said he, a short time before he saw the volume, "for Mr. Burke's Reflections on the Revolution in France." After perusing it, he wrote on two occasions—"Burke's book is a most admirable medicine against the French disease. I admire his eloquence; I approve his politics; I adore his chivalry; and I can almost forgive his reverence for church establishments;" showing in the last clause of this sentence what inconsistency a prejudice may cause a learned and acute man to commit, as if he seemed unconscious that not to uphold the church would be to relinquish one of the strongest arguments for the stability of the state.

"I conceive," writes Cumberland, who, though seldom given to eulogize a brother author, was on this occasion surprised into an express letter of congratulation the first week after the publication, a proof at least of his critical judgment—"there is not to be found in all the writings of my day, perhaps I may say not in the English language, so brilliant a cluster of fine and beautiful passages as we are presented with in Edmund Burke's inimitable tract on the French Revolution. It is most highly coloured and most richly ornamented, but there is elegance in its splendour, and dignity in its magnificence. The orator demands attention in a loud and lofty tone, but his voice never loses its melody, nor his periods their sweetness. When he has roused us with the thunder of his eloquence, he can at once, Timotheus-like, choose a melancholy theme, and melt us into pity: there is grace in his anger; for he can inveigh without vulgarity; he can modulate the strongest burst of passion, for even in his madness there is music."

To the letter from this gentleman the following was the reply:—

"Beaconsfield, November 13, 1790.

"Dear Sir,

"I was yesterday honoured with your most obliging letter. You may be assured that nothing could be more flattering to me than the approbation of a gentleman so distinguished in literature as you are, and in so great a variety of its branches. It is an earnest to me of that degree of toleration in the public judgment, which may give my reasonings some chance of being useful. I know however that I am indebted to your politeness and your good nature as much as to your opinion, for the indulgent manner in which you have been pleased to receive my endeavour.

"Whether I have described our countrymen properly, time is to show: I hope I have, but at any rate it is perhaps the best way to persuade them to be right by supposing that they are so. Great bodies like great men must be instructed in the way in which they will be best pleased to receive instruction; flattery itself may be converted into a mode of counsel; *laudando admonere* has not always been the most unsuccessful method of advice. In this case moral policy requires it, for when you must expose the practices of some kinds of men, you do nothing if you do not distinguish them from others.

"Accept once more my best acknowledgments for the very handsome manner in which you have been pleased to consider my pamphlet, and do me the justice to believe me, with the most perfect respect,

"Dear Sir,
"Your most faithful and obliged humble servant,
"EDMUND BURKE."

Several eulogies as strong as that of Cumberland might be transcribed, but one delivered soon afterward by a professed political opponent, the late Lord (then Mr.) Erskine, is too just and characteristic to be omitted.

"I shall take care to put Mr. Burke's work, on the French Revolution, into the hands of those whose principles are left to my formation. I shall take care that they have the advantage of doing, in the regular progression of youthful studies, what I have done even in the short intervals of laborious life; that they shall transcribe, with their own hands, from all the works of this most extraordinary person, and from the last among the rest, the soundest truths of religion; the justest principles of morals, inculcated and rendered delightful by the most sublime eloquence; the highest reach of philosophy, brought down to the level of common minds, by the most captivating taste; the most enlightened observations on history, and the most copious collection of useful maxims from the experience of common life; and separate for themselves the good from the bad."

Another writer* who himself possesses no inconsiderable claims to eloquence, speaks of the execution of the work in nearly a similar style. But its doctrines were as little to his taste as to that of the great advocate just mentioned, for both being infected by the political epidemic of the day, and deluded by the prevailing revolutionary nomenclature of original rights—nature—perfectibility—a jargon dignified with the name of reason, prostrated their intellect to the worship of this wooden idol which they would feign have exalted into a deity.

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* The Rev. Robert Hall, a dissenting minister of Leicester—"Apology for the Freedom of the Press."

"It is pretended that the moment we quit a state of *nature*, as we have given up the controul of our own actions in return for the superior advantages of law and government, we can never appeal again to any original principles, but must rest content with the advantages that are secured by the terms of the society.

"These are the views which distinguish the political writings of Mr. Burke, an author whose splendid and unequalled powers have given vogue and fashion to certain tenets, which from any other pen would have appeared abject and contemptible. In the field of reason the encounter would not be difficult,* but who can withstand the fascination and magic of his eloquence? The excursions of his genius are immense! His imperial fancy has laid all nature under tribute, and has collected riches from every scene of the creation, and every walk of art. His eulogium on the Queen of France is a masterpiece of pathetic composition; so select are its images, so fraught with tenderness, and so rich with colours "dipt in heaven," that he who can read it without rapture may have merit as a reasoner, but must resign all pretensions to taste and sensibility. His imagination is in truth only too prolific: a world of itself, where he dwells in the midst of chimerical alarms, is the dupe of his own enchantments, and starts like Prospero, at the spectres of his own creation."

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* Easy as the matter seems to this writer, no opponent has ventured into this "field of reason," without receiving a signal overthrow; for there is little or nothing in Mr. Burke's doctrines with which a constitutional inquirer of steady patriotism and moderate views can find substantial fault.

Dr. Beattie, who, as far as opinions went, had always hitherto been opposed to him in politics, but who knew the soundness of his principles when any real danger threatened the state, thus writes, April 25, 1790, six months before the publication.—" I wish Mr. Burke would publish what he intended on the present state of France. He is a man of principle, and a friend to religion, to law, and to monarchy, as well as to liberty."

One of the suspected authors of Junius's Letters (Hugh Boyd) in allusion to this production of his old acquaintance, and the event it was meant to reprobate, thus writes :—

" But to turn to the more pleasing view, where the finest talents combat on the side of truth. We have seen their triumph in the noblest cause; in the cause of religion, law, and order; in defence of every sacred post and barrier, essential not alone to the security and happiness of mankind, but to the very existence of society. The sublime comprehension of that penetrating genius (Mr. Burke) which in the early dawn of democracy saw the destructive principle of general conflagration that was to flame in its meridian, gave the alarm to the world; and his warning voice was heard. The baleful influence threatening every confine of humanity, was averted; and the portentous meteor consumed in its own fires, passes away for ever."

On the other hand, this book was reprobated as assailing the very foundations of liberty, by a party bold, numerous, and able, at the head of which, or at least countenancing it, stood Mr. Fox. His censures were not merely unreserved, but delivered, as he himself avowed, in all companies, public and private, whenever it became a subject of discussion. Some months afterwards he termed it in the House of Commons, with more of pique, or less of judgment, than could be expected from such a man, "a libel on all free governments," and, "he disliked it as much as any of Mr. Paine's;" remarks not very delicate or conciliatory as applied to the production of a friend, and the latter certainly displaying a peculiar political taste; but both almost verifying a remark of Burke at a future period, that "the French Revolution had not merely shaken all the thrones of Europe, but shaken his friend Fox's heart and understanding out of their right places."

This party besides embraced many other Members of Opposition, his followers, some philosophers, the great body of second-rate literary men, some clergymen, many lawyers, many dissenting ministers, and nine-tenths of the profession of physic—all therefore belonging to the educated classes, but the great majority without claim to any practical acquaintance with politics; men deep in speculation, and in books, but wholly ignorant of the workings of governments; who knew nothing of human nature in great and untried emergencies, such as the state of France then exhibited; who mistook warm feelings and prejudices for sound principles; some who, with good intentions toward mankind, would have committed the grossest errors in reducing them to practice; and many whose views upon the constitution of the country were more than questionable.

By this body Mr. Burke and his Work* were assailed with a degree of animosity unprecedented in the political warfare even of England, and so perseveringly continued to the present day by the shattered remnants of the same order of politicians, that among the half-read classes of society who seldom like the labour of inquiring or thinking for themselves, there is a kind of common agreement to censure his conduct and doctrines without knowing what they really were or to what they tended. No pains indeed were spared to produce this effect. Every epithet of abuse in the language was applied to him; and every action, or expression of his life, that could be tortured into a sinister meaning, was raked up in order to show his inconsistency, yet after all, they proved so few and frivolous, that they have not been thought worth repeating; and thus, he "whose whole life had been a struggle for the liberty of others," was reviled as the enemy of all liberty.

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* A celebrated phrase, contained in this book, was bruited about in every form of speech and writing, in order to excite the popular indignation. In speaking of the destruction of the nobility and clergy, he said, that along with these, its natural protectors, learning would be "trodden down under the hoofs of a swinish multitude." The expression, though plainly figurative, was tortured to mean that he actually thought the people no better than swine, yet all other impassioned writers have dealt in the same license of language without reproach, or even remark; among which the reader will immediately recollect "the common dung o' the soil," and many others as strong, applied to the mass of mankind. Even Republican Milton uses the words "herd confused," "miscellaneous rabble" applied to the multitude, so little respect was there in the mind of that sturdy opponent of monarchy for the "majesty of the people."

The truth perhaps was, that their and his ideas of liberty were, and always had been, different. They chose to become angry because a man so long and so generally celebrated as its advocate, should hesitate to give his sanction to any thing which assumed the name, however questionable might be the substance; they made no allowances for having mistaken him, or for his not agreeing with them in the detail; because he differed in opinion with them, it was inferred, however absurdly, that he must differ from himself. They thought that liberty, no matter in what shape and garb it came, or how accompanied, or by whatever qualities or characteristics distinguished, must necessarily be good. They looked chiefly to the abstract idea of the thing, not to the form it assumed, or the effects it produced.

Mr. Burke, on the contrary, would not allow the term liberty to be applicable to a system whose course was stained by incessant violence and bloodshed; which inflicted or permitted the most grinding tyranny and injustice on persons and property; which was in itself a crude and untried theory unsanctioned by reason and undisciplined by law; at variance with the experience of mankind, and with the ancient and reasonable habits and institutions of the country itself. The liberty decreed by the National Assembly he considered the vilest of mockeries. Liberty, no matter how plausible the form or high-sounding its pretensions, was in his opinion liberty only, when it secured equal civil rights, equal justice and protection, equal social enjoyments and privileges to all members of the community.

Sentiments similar to these occur so frequently in his earlier and later Works, in all his speeches and writings on the subject, that it seems strange how they could ever be misunderstood. The passage already quoted from his speech against the repeal of the Marriage Act,* in 1781, speaks this language so forcibly and explicitly that no excuse can avail for mistaking or misrepresenting it. Another passage from an old report of one of his speeches at Bristol, in 1774, illustrates similar sentiments: "The distinguishing part of our constitution is its liberty. To preserve that liberty inviolate seems the particular duty and proper trust of a Member of the House of Commons. *But the liberty, the only liberty I mean, is a liberty connected with order; that not only exists along with virtue and order, but which cannot exist without them.*" Addressing the same constituents in 1780, in allusion to the condition of the Roman Catholics, he says, "*I must fairly tell you, that so far as my principles are concerned* (principles that I hope will only depart with my last breath), *that I have no idea of a liberty unconnected with honesty and justice;* * * factions in republics have been and are full as capable as monarchs of the most cruel oppression and injustice; *it is but too true, that the love and even the very idea of genuine liberty is extremely rare.*"—

Any one professing such sentiments as these could not in fact, to preserve his consistency, do otherwise than oppose the French Revolution as Mr. Burke opposed it, for it corresponded with none of his conceptions of genuine freedom. We have seen that he had his doubts of its nature from the first, and far from blowing hot and cold upon it in a breath like some of his contemporaries, gradually rose from caution to apprehension, from apprehension to certainty, that such proceedings as he saw going on could be productive only of enormous evils. He did not hate the revolution in France simply because it was a revolution,* but because it was an execrably bad one; or rather the utter dissolution, at a blow, of government, religion, and morals,—all the elements which not merely bind men together, but have in fact from the condition of savages made us men. He did not war against liberty, but against the abuses committed under its name; not against freedom but against licentiousness. He allowed no inherent power in the half or the majority of a nation to annihilate the persons, the property, or the honours of the remainder, at their will and pleasure, by way of political experiment or speculative improvement; "he could not admit the right of any people to do what they pleased, until he first knew what it pleased them to do."

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* See page 389, vol. i.

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* It is well known that he highly approved of the revolution in Poland going on about the same time, because, instead of plunging their country into anarchy, the leading men there exerted all their talents to rescue it from such a state by instituting a wise and constitutional form of government. Unhappily it proved ill-timed. Catherine of Russia made it a pretext for annihilating both it and the existence of the country as an independent state; and Buonaparte, when it was in his power, had not generosity enough to reverse the iniquitous proceeding.

It is a remarkable fact, and another instance of the keenness and length of view of Mr. Burke, that though the danger was obvious to him, neither the government nor the nation at large had any idea that French opinions and principles were so generally diffused in England, or that they had made so many converts. But the publication of his book disclosed the extent of the mischief which had been silently though rapidly spreading, by the number of answers it produced; the writer of this has counted no less than 38 which came out within a few months, and several have doubtless escaped his notice, while others may have appeared at a later period; but were all the letters, essays, fragments, and invectives of every denomination collected, which have appeared then and since, in magazines, reviews, newspapers, annual registers, and every form of publication, periodical and otherwise, on this prolific theme, they would amount to many thousands.

In the list of opponents were the names of Priestley, Price (who dying soon after the appearance of the "Reflections," which his sermon had partly provoked, was said by his friends to have hurt him and by others to have killed him), Earl Stanhope, Mrs. Wolstonecraft, Mrs. Macaulay, Graham, the historian, Mr. (now Sir James) Mackintosh, and Thomas Paine. Some of their works have voluntarily sought oblivion, and some have been reluctantly forced into it. The "Vindiciæ Gallicæ" alone was the production of a more sober inquirer, a scholar, and a gentleman, who though he then wrote upon politics with the dim and flickering light of a closet philosopher, has since learned to judge and to act in a more practical spirit, chiefly by the teaching of that very master whom he had thus ventured to oppose, and whom he soon afterwards characterized as—" A writer who was admired by all mankind for his eloquence, but who is, if possible, still more admired by all competent judges for his philosophy; a writer of whom I may justly say, that he was *gravissimus et decendi et intelligendi auctor et magister*." Even from the first, however, he exhibited the confidence in himself of one who could afford to be at once bold and liberal in his opposition to the great orator —who could advocate what he thought freedom to others without madly assaulting the foundations of our own, who could investigate doctrines without descending to personal abuse of the author, who, in endeavouring to refute them could admit his worth, his extraordinary powers, and, in spite of the clamour to the contrary, the general consistency of his life and principles. Such a man was, and still is, Sir James Mackintosh, a statesman of the first class, who, if not at the head of the party with whom he has so long and so vainly laboured, is certainly not justled from it by any thing like superiority of mind among its more acknowledged leaders.

Of a very different description was " The Rights of Man," by Thomas Paine. This remarkable character, who had arrived from America in 1787, brought with him a letter of introduction to Mr. Burke from the Hon. Henry Laurens, Ex-President of Congress, and who it will be remembered had been released from the Tower in 1781, by the exertions of the former, requesting the exertion of his influence to attract public notice to some mechanical contrivances of Mr. Paine, particularly the model of an iron bridge. Mr. Burke, with his accustomed hospitality, invited him to Beaconsfield, took him during a summer excursion to Yorkshire to several iron-founderies there in order to gain the opinions of practical men, and introduced him to several persons of rank; to which there is an allusion in the following note to Mr. Wilkes:—

"My dear Sir,

"I come at your requisition to the service of a cause rendered dearer to me by your accession to it. Since you will have it so I will eat venison in honour of old England; let me know at Gerrard Street when and where. You make too much of the prattle of the world and the effect of any opinion of mine, whether real or supposed. The libels and the panegyrics of the newspapers can neither frighten nor flatter me out of my principles; but (except for the evil of example) it is no matter at all if they did. However, since you think my appearance something, you shall have me in my blue and buff; we all indeed long very much to see you, and are much your humble servants. I am just going to dine with the Duke of Portland, in company with the great American Paine, whom I take with me.

"Ever, my dear Sir,
"Your most affectionate faithful friend,
"Edmund Burke.

"Beaconsfield, August 18th, 1788."

At this time, Paine, whom it is doubtful that he knew to be an Englishman, professed to have wholly relinquished politics. But soon afterwards having visited France in order to inspect the plans and models in the Public Office of Bridges and Highways introduced by a letter from Dr. Franklin to the Duke de la Rochefoucauld, the incipient disorders of that country revived in his mind the dormant spirit of turbulence and dissatisfaction towards existing institutions, which seemed inherent in him; he returned to England to all appearance well-informed of the designs of the popular leaders, of which many intelligible intimations were dropped to Mr. Burke, with a recommendation to him that he should endeavour to introduce a *more enlarged system of liberty* into England, using Reform in Parliament as the most obvious means.

This hint, thrown out probably to sound him, was, as may be believed, coldly received. "Do you really imagine, Mr. Paine, that the constitution of this kingdom requires such innovations, or could exist with them, or that any reflecting man would seriously engage in them? You are aware that I have all my life opposed such schemes of reform; of course, because I knew them not to be reform." Not discouraged by this rebuff, Paine continued his correspondence from Paris in the summer of 1789, and there is no doubt whatever, first communicated to his distinguished acquaintance certain information that the destruction of the monarchy was resolved upon; that the leaders had determined to set fire to the four corners of France sooner than not carry their principles into practice; and that no danger was to be apprehended from the army, for it was *gained.* This remarkable note is said by a friend of Mr. Burke's to be dated only three days before the destruction of the Bastile.

Though his intimacy with Mr. Burke had somewhat declined previously to the appearance of the "Reflections," his more noxious peculiarities remained unknown, the leveller and the deist being shrouded under the guise of the ingenious mechanist. But the "Rights of Man," written as an answer to Mr. Burke's work, exhibited at once the mental deformity of the man, inimical to nearly every thing that bore the stamp of authority, or of time, or of opinion. In accordance with this unhappy and mischievous disposition, he had long before stifled the best feelings of our nature by voluntary dereliction of the marriage ties and duties; he had divested himself of the troublesome restraints of religion; he had shaken off all confined notions of attachment to his country. Nothing of an Englishman remained of him but the name, and even this he tried to extinguish by becoming successively by adoption an American and a Frenchman: but as his principles were a scandal to all, so all perhaps would willingly be rid of the dishonour attached to owning such a citizen.

It was his aim, by perverting what capacity he possessed, not to make men better or happier but to be discontented with what they were, with what they knew, or with what they already enjoyed. His systems, both in religion and politics, led not merely to the disorganization of states, but of the human mind itself, by setting it adrift on the waters of doubt and despair, without a resting-place or land-mark for its guidance in this world, or hope in the next. To a style of writing and reasoning well adapted to impose upon ordinary understandings, he added a cool temper and designing head, unfettered by the common restraints and scruples of mankind. To the trades of staymaker, schoolmaster, and exciseman, in his native country, he had added what is so often the resort of desperate men, the profession of a patriot in America. He had proved a brute to his wife, a cheat to his trust, a traitor to his country, a reviler of his God and of his King; and having already successfully aided and abetted rebellion abroad, seemed to be cut out for the presiding genius of a revolution at home, if not prematurely taken off by the hand of the executioner. But, as if in his own person to warn us of the desolating tendency of his doctrines, he completed the catalogue of his offences by adultery with the wife of his friend, by the brutal treatment and desertion of his victim, by inveterate drunkenness, and abominable filth of person. The very excess of his moral degradation almost made him an object of compassion. His life was evil, and his end miserable.

The book was characteristic of the man. Its purpose was, through the debasing principle of envy which is after all the main principle of a leveller, to reduce all mankind to one standard, to write up a sort of *confusion made easy*, by addressing the baser to war against the better passions of our nature by pulling down superior station, talents, virtues, and distinctions to the level of the lowest. It was an open declaration of hostility to all the institutions which we in England had been accustomed to consider as our ornament and pride; not a reform of the real or imaginary abuses of government, but a pretty plain recommendation to pull it down altogether for the pleasure of building afresh on the republican model—good perhaps in the eyes of an American, but at variance with the habits, the feelings, the opinions, the honest convictions and prejudices of an Englishman. It affords an illustration of the phrenzy of the day, that this production was devoured rather than read, idolized rather than praised by that strong party, many of them of rank and influence, who intent on committing a species of moral suicide, disseminated it in cheap editions through the country; thus flinging a fire-brand into every cottage to burst out and consume themselves; while in the clubs and societies of cities the same insane spirit of animosity, under cover of affected satisfaction, was shown in the favourite toast constantly drunk—"thanks to Mr. Burke for the discussion he has provoked,"—as if they malignantly hoped or wished the world to believe, that he had injured those vital interests of the state, of which in fact his book proved the salvation.

It may not be unworthy of remark, that two others of his literary opponents on this question, Mr. Christie and Mr. Bousefield, were among the number of his personal acquaintance. The latter, who proved to be the most virulent, had been recommended to the notice of Burke by some of his friends in the county of Cork, of which that person was a native, and had in consequence participated largely in the hospitalities of Beaconsfield, as well as something in the friendship of its owner. The only return he made was by venting upon him nearly all the abuse of which he was master. Of another of his republican acquaintance of rather more celebrity than these persons, he gave the following account, when speaking of the address of a deputation from the constitutional society of London, formed of Joel Barlow and John Frost, to the National Convention, with a message expressing a hope that all nations would soon follow their example in effecting a similar revolution, and making a patriotic present of a thousand pairs of shoes to the soldiers of liberty:—

"The extravagance of Anacharsis Clootz in wishing to embrace China, Quebec, Bulam, and in short all the world, in the confraternity of France, was not peculiar to him, but was also entertained by all the members of the Assembly. This Clootz was an old acquaintance and correspondent of his, being very respectably introduced to him, and had no small share in producing the French Revolution. He was a Prussian by birth, highly conversant in every branch of literature, and much better qualified to act the part of a philosopher than John Frost as a deputy from the people of Great Britain. In June 1790 this man appeared at the bar of the National Assembly, accompanied by men of all nations, Asiatic, African, and European, of which latter the English made no inconsiderable part. There, as orator of the human race, he invoked for them all the protection and confraternity of France; and this happened on the very day when the Assembly demolished, by a decree, the nobility of France."

The translator of the "Reflections" (Mons. Dupont) conceiving that the character given in that work of Henry IV. of France was somewhat harsh, and might be unpleasing to royalist ears in that country, requested him to revise and soften it, and in reply, received the following justification of what he had already advanced; which, as containing his opinion of a great historical character, the reader will not be displeased to see here, particularly as he will not find it any where else. The passage objected to runs thus—

"Henry of Navarre was a politic and active prince. He possessed indeed great humanity and mildness; but an humanity and mildness that never stood in the way of his interests. He never sought to be loved without first putting himself in a way to be feared. He used soft language with determined conduct. He asserted and maintained his humanity in the gross, and distributed his acts of concession only in the detail. He spent the income of his prerogative nobly, but he took care not to break in upon the capital; never abandoning, for a moment, any of the claims which he made under the fundamental laws, nor sparing to shed the blood of those who opposed him, often in the field, sometimes upon the scaffold."

"SIR,

"Yesterday I had the honour of receiving your letter, in which you desire that I may revise and soften the expressions which I have made use of concerning Henry IV., King of France. I am not at all surprised at your request, for, since your childhood, you have heard every one talk of the pleasing manners and mild temper of that Prince. Those qualities have shaded, and almost obliterated, that vigilance and vigour without which he would never have either merited or enjoyed the title of Great. The intention of this is self-evident. The name of Henry IV. recalls the idea of his popularity; the sovereigns of France are proud to have descended from this hero, and are taught to look up to him as to a model. It is under the shelter of his venerable name that all the conspirators against the laws, against religion, and against good order, have dared to persuade their King that he ought to abandon all the precautions of power to the designs of ambition. After having thus disarmed, they have resolved to deliver their Sovereign, his nobility, and his magistrates (the natural supporters of his throne), into the hands of thieves and of assassins. It is a long time since this plot was first formed. It was resolved to put it into execution according to circumstances; and the mode adopted of every where suspending the portraits of Henry IV. was one of the means employed for the success of the design—a means truly perfidious, as it holds out snares to the unwary, and catches mankind by the bait of their own virtues.

"Every time that this politic Prince had occasion to deliver one of his insinuating harangues (which was very often), he took particular care not to be too literal in his expressions. It was, I suppose, to a kind of assembly of notables that he spoke of his design to free himself entirely from their restraint. But when he employed these courtly threats, of which, by the bye, he was very liberal, he advanced his right foot, and, as he himself says, 'always clapped his hand upon the hilt of his sword.' Those men whose power is envied, and against whom violent factions are formed, cannot with safety be good in any other manner. Trajan, Marcus Aurelius, and all others in similar situations, who have dared to be virtuous, could never have enjoyed this arduous and critical pre-eminence but by inviolably pursuing all the means in their power of attracting respect, and of sustaining their authority. Without this, they could not have exercised their benevolence. In such a situation a prince may with safety, and with as much sagacity as glory, divide his authority with his people, because then he has the power to divide it at his discretion, and is not forced to abandon it.

"Whatever may be the honour annexed to such a voluntary division, whatever may be the political motive that can induce a sovereign to make such a sacrifice in certain cases, Henry IV. neither did the one nor the other; he never, in any manner whatever, parted with an atom of his authority. Did he ever leave it to the judgment of the citizens of Paris to determine the right which the laws of the kingdom gave him, of being their King and their Sovereign? Did they ever enter into any treaty with him concerning his title to the throne? Where is there, in the long catalogue of the unlimited prerogatives of the King of France (be they just or unjust) an article which he ever abandoned, limited, or even submitted to inquiry? He would have been still more illustrious, if, after having purchased and conquered his kingdom, he had done this, and if he had become the founder of a regular constitution. Historical facts have not furnished me with the means of deciding, in a proper manner, if ever he found himself in a situation to acquire this glory, or if he then could have made any attempts of that kind, with a greater degree of safety than has been done on a recent occasion. But it is very probable that he never had any of this kind. If you read the Memoirs of Sully with attention (and I suppose that the opinions of the Minister differed little from those of his master), you will easily perceive that they were both royalists in all the extent of the expression, and, with some few exceptions, they constantly maintained that species of government.

"As to the blood that Henry shed, he never spilt one drop more than was necessary for the maintenance of his right, which he on no occasion would submit to any species of popular decision; he however could kill when it was necessary. How many bloody battles did he not fight against the majority of the French nation? How many cities did he not sack and pillage? Was his Minister ashamed of sharing the booty that fell into his hands? It is true, that while closely besieging his own capital, he relieved and protected the unfortunate families who, at the peril of their lives, sallied forth to gather a scanty harvest under the walls of this very capital. I approve this conduct, but it does not inspire me with an enthusiastic admiration. He would have almost been a monster in cruelty, and an idiot in politics, had he done otherwise. But while he was so compassionate to a few wretches dying of hunger, one cannot forget that it was he himself who famished them by hundreds and by thousands, before he was in a situation to treat thus compassionately a few isolated individuals. It is true, indeed, that in starving Paris he did nothing but what was conformable to the right of war; but that was a right which he enforced in all its plenitude. He followed the dictates of his heart and of his policy in the acts of compassion attributed to him; as to the famine which he occasioned, it was in consequence of the position of his army. But can you support the panegyrists of Henry IV. in regard to this very siege of Paris, when you recollect the late deplorable scarcity, and, above all, what has been done in consequence of that unhappy epoch? Of the occurrences that followed I shall not speak at present, although I think that that ought to be done to inspire every honest heart with horror and indignation.

"As to the 'scaffold,' it is impossible to decide at this moment whether it would not have been more prudent for Henry IV. to have saved the Marechal de Biron, instead of cutting off his head within the walls of the Bastile. He was under great obligations to this Marechal of France, as well as to his father; but Henry was less remarkable for his gratitude than his clemency. As he never shed blood but for just reasons, I suppose that he thought himself obliged to do it then, on account of the good of his people and the security of his throne. It must be allowed, however, that if he had pardoned this rash and impetuous man, he would never have been reproached with this act of commiseration. If he imagined that the Marechal de Biron was capable of some of those scenes which we have lately seen exhibited in your kingdom; if he supposed that he might produce the same anarchy, the same confusion, and the same distress,* as the same preliminaries to a humiliating and vexatious tyranny, which we are on the point of beholding in France under the name of a Constitution; it was right, very right, to cut, on its very formation, the very first thread of so many treasons!

"He would never have merited the crown that he acquired, and which he wore with so much glory, if, interposing his compassion to defeat the preservative effects of a severe execution, he had scrupled to punish those traitors and enemies of their country, and of the human race; for, believe me, there can be no virtue where there is no wisdom. Weakness only, that is to say, the parent and ally of crimes, would have allowed itself to be affected by misdeeds, which have a connexion with power, and which aim at the usurpation of a certain degree of authority. To pardon such enemies, is to do the same thing as those who attempt the destruction of religion, of the laws, of policy, of morality, of industry, of liberty, and of the prosperity of your country. If Henry IV. had such subjects as those who rule France at this very moment, he would do nothing more than his duty in punishing them. The present Sovereign is in the situation of a victim, and not the avenger of rebellion. It is rather a misfortune than a crime, that he has not prevented this revolution with that vigorous precaution, that activity, and that momentary decision, which characterized Henry IV. Louis XVI., according to what I hear and believe, has received from nature as perfect an understanding, and a heart as soft and humane, as his illustrious ancestors. These are, indeed, the elements of virtue; but he was born under the canopy of a throne, and was not prepared by adversity for a situation, the trials of which the most perfect and the most absolute virtue could have scarce resisted.

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* An allusion to the conduct of the Duke of Orleans.

"As to the men, the means, the pretexts, the projects, the consequences arising from false plans and false calculations, of every nature and every species, which have reduced this Sovereign to appear in no better light than an instrument for the ruin of his country—these are circumstances to be recorded and commented on by the historian.—These remarks, Sir, have been occasioned by reading your letter; you may print them as an appendix to your work, or in whatever manner you please; or you may keep them for your own private satisfaction. I leave it entirely to your discretion.

"I am, Sir,
"Your very humble servant,
"EDMUND BURKE.

"Beaconsfield, January 2d, 1791."

A reply from the French correspondent to whom the "Reflections" had been addressed, dated 17th November, 1790, gave Mr. Burke an opportunity of following up his blow by a rejoinder entitled "Letter to a Member of the National Assembly." In this, which appeared in February, 1791, he advances many new observations, sets others in stronger lights, and glances at the characters of some of their writers whose principles it was the fashion to follow, as being no better than what he on another occasion termed "the mere jays and magpies of philosophy."

Rosseau he sketches in strong yet not undue terms, when considered as he says he must be, either " as a moralist or as nothing."

" We have had the great professor and founder of *the philosophy of vanity* in England.* As I had good opportunities of knowing his proceedings almost from day to day, he left no doubt on my mind that he entertained no principle either to influence his heart or to guide his understanding, but *vanity*. With this vice he was possessed to a degree little short of madness. It is from the same deranged eccentric vanity that this, the insane *Socrates*, of the National Assembly was impelled to publish a mad confession of his mad faults, and to attempt a new sort of glory from bringing hardily to light the obscure and vulgar vices which we know may sometimes be blended with eminent talents. He has not observed on the nature of vanity who does not know that it is omnivorous; that it has no choice in its food; that it is fond to talk even of its own faults and vices as what will excite surprise and draw attention, and what will pass at worst for openness and candour.

" It was this abuse and perversion which vanity makes even of hypocrisy, which has driven Rosseau to record a life, not so much as chequered or spotted here and there with virtues, or even distinguished by a single good action. It is such a life he chooses to offer to the attention of mankind. It is such a life that, with a wild defiance, he flings in the face of his Creator, whom he acknowledges only to brave. Your Assembly knowing how much more powerful example is found than precept, has chosen this man (by his own account, without a single virtue) for a model. To him they erect their first statue. From him they commence their series of honours and distinctions."

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* In 1766, when he came, on the invitation of Hume, and behaved to him in a manner so extraordinary as to be inexplicable in any other way than to suppose him to be wholly possessed by what may be termed the *insanity* of vanity. Mr. Burke was then in frequent communication with Hume, from the connexion of the latter with Lord Hertford, who, with his brother, General Conway, supported and indeed formed part of the Rockingham administration, and from the philosopher himself, he personally heard the proceedings of his extraordinary guest.

He asserts in this letter from almost positive knowledge that the excesses of the revolution were not accidental, as some believed, or pretended to believe, but were systematically designed from the beginning, even previous to the meeting of the states-general. He hints likewise at the necessity for that coalition of the sovereigns of Europe against France, which first actually took place a few months afterward; and explicitly states the intention of the prevailing faction to put the King to death whenever his name should become no longer necessary to their designs.

The declaration by the French Embassador, at this period, of his Sovereign's acceptance of the new constitution, drew from Mr. Burke a paper privately presented to the Ministry, "Hints for a Memorial to M. De Montmorin."—It recommended the offer of British mediation between that Monarch and his subjects on the basis of a free constitution, to be guaranteed, if required, by England; and in case of refusal by the popular party, to intimate the design of withdrawing our Minister from a Court where the Sovereign no longer enjoyed personal liberty or political consideration. General opinion since has been in favour of the policy of the advice.

In the mean time several threatening indications proclaimed an approaching breach of the most appalling kind in the Whig party, very few of whom, or indeed scarcely one except three or four of his personal friends, could be persuaded by Mr. Burke of the irretrievable mischiefs at work in France, and likely to approach our own shores. Mr. Fox expressed his approval of the principles, though not of the proceedings there, twice or thrice in no measured terms; once, April 15th, in a debate on the Russian armament, when Mr. Burke rising to reply, was overpowered by continued cries of question from his own side of the House, and by the late hour (three o'clock) in the morning; and again on a Bill providing a constitution for Canada, April 8th, when Burke was not present. On this occasion Mr. Fox directed pointed censure against some of the chief doctrines in Mr. Burke's late publications, directly questioning the utility of hereditary power or honours, or of titles of rank, and concluding with a sneer at "ribbons red and blue." These opinions might have been honest, though perhaps neither very sound nor in the very best taste; they were unquestionably imprudent; they were verbatim the revolutionary cant of the day, to which sanction was thus given by a man of no ordinary weight and influence in the country; and they could not well be considered otherwise than as a direct challenge to discussion on a most irritable theme, addressed indirectly by him to his old associate.*

As such Mr. Burke evidently considered it, when, on the 6th of May, on the same bill, he rose to state his sentiments in reply. But in adverting to the French Constitution by name, and the unhappy scenes to which it had given rise, he was loudly called to order from the Opposition benches. Mr. Fox, who had himself made allusions as strong by implication and by name to the same measure, unexpectedly assailed him by an ironical defence, recommending to the House in effect to let him say what he pleased. Mr. Burke, after noticing this circumstance, resumed his argument, and again experienced successively seven other formal interruptions at short intervals, accompanied by speeches to order from different members of his own party, while at the same moment, others on the opposite or ministerial side maintaining he was perfectly in order, this contention presenting, amid contending shouts of Chair! chair! Hear! hear! Order! order! Go on! go on! a scene which Mr. Burke remarked at the moment was only to be paralleled in the political meetings of a neighbouring country of which he was endeavouring to convey some idea to the House.

At length, an express vote of censure for noticing the affairs of France was moved against him by Lord Sheffield, and seconded by Mr. Fox; Mr. Pitt, on the contrary, who had repeatedly cheered the speech, leaned to his views, urged that he was in order, that he was grateful to the right hon. gentleman for the manly struggle made by him against French principles, that his views should receive his support whenever the danger approached, and that his zeal and eloquence in such a cause entitled him to the warmest gratitude of all his fellow subjects. Mr. Fox followed in a vehement address, alternately rebuking and complimenting Mr. Burke, in a high strain, and while vindicating his own opinions, questioning the truth and consistency of those of his right hon. friend who he must ever esteem his master but who nevertheless seemed to have forgotten the lessons he had taught him ; and in support of the charge of inconsistency thus advanced, he quoted several sarcastic and ludicrous remarks of little moment at any time and scarcely worth repeating then, but which, as they had been expressed 14 and 15 years before, seemed to have been raked up purposely for the occasion.

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* Mr. Sheridan had also about the same time reiterated the same opinions.

There was an appearance of premeditation and want of generosity in this, which hurt Mr. Burke, as he afterwards expressed to a friend, more than any public occurrence of his life, and he rose to reply under the influence of very painful but very strong feelings. He complained, after debating the main question, of being treated with harshness and malignity for which the motive seemed unaccountable—of being personally attacked from a quarter where he least expected it after an intimacy of more than 22 years,—of his public sentiments and writings being garbled, and his confidential communications violated, to give colour to an unjust charge ; and that, though at his time of life it was obviously indiscreet to provoke enemies or to lose friends, as he could not hope for the opportunities necessary to acquire others, yet if his steady adherence to the British constitution placed him in such a dilemma, he would risk all, and as public duty and public prudence taught him, with his last breath exclaim "Fly from the French constitution!" Mr. Fox here whispered, "there is no loss of friendship." "I regret to say, there is," was the reply—"I know the value of my line of conduct; I have, indeed, made a great sacrifice; I have done my duty though I have lost my friend; there is something in the detested French constitution that envenoms every thing it touches;" and, after a variety of comments on the question, previous and subsequent to this avowal, concluded with an eloquent apostrophe to the two great heads of their respective parties, steadfastly to guard against innovation and new theories, whatever might be their other differences, the sacred edifice of the British constitution.

Unusually agitated by this public and pointed renunciation of long intimacy, Mr. Fox rose evidently much affected, and at length found relief in tears.—Some moments elapsed before he had recovered sufficiently to proceed in his address, when, besides touching on the bill and on French affairs, an eloquent appeal burst forth to his old and revered friend—to the remembrance of their past attachment—their unalienable friendship—their reciprocal affection, as dear and almost as binding as the ties of nature between father and son. Seldom had there been heard in the House of Commons an appeal so pathetic and so personal. Yet even at this moment when he was seemingly dissolved in tenderness, the pertinacity of the professed and thoroughbred disputant prevailed over the feelings of the man; he gave utterance to unusually bitter sarcasms, reiterated his objectionable remarks, adding others not of the most conciliatory tendency, and of course rather aggravating than extenuating the original offence. Rejoinders on both sides followed, without subsiding into more amicable sentiments, and thenceforward the intimacy of these illustrious men ceased.

Such are, in brief, the facts connected with this memorable dispute, which excited more general interest, and produced more important results, than any thing similar in our political annals. Opposition instantly saw in it the loss of much of that consequence they had hitherto enjoyed as a body in the State, and though at first thunderstruck at the consequences, soon proceeded to utter the harshest animadversions upon Mr. Burke, both at the breaking up of the House, as well as on all occasions afterwards during his life, and continued by writers of the same political partialities even to this day, not one of whom, however, but misrepresents the circumstances of the quarrel, or attributes it, on the part of that gentleman, either to a preconcerted scheme to quit them, or to splenetic ill-humour at not being permitted to dictate the line of conduct of the body of which he was a member.

These assertions are now known to be wholly false. If design can be attributed to either party, it would seem assuredly to have rested rather with Mr. Fox and his friends than with Mr. Burke, for though they probably did not desire an open rupture with him, they went the precise way to work in order to effect it; for there is not a stronger instance in Parliamentary history than this, of what may be termed a *dead set*[*] being made upon a Member to prevent him from delivering his sentiments on an extraordinary and questionable event upon the trifling pretext of being out of order. Admitting him for argument sake to have been out of order, which was not the case as the House decided, was it the business of his *friends* to attack him upon that head?—of the men, with whom he had been so long associated, whose career he had often directed, whose battles he had fought, whose credit he had been the first to raise in public esteem—to assail him with vehement disapprobation, persevering interruptions, and votes of censure? All that he asked for, or expected at the moment, was the liberty of expressing his sentiments—and this they in effect told him he should not be permitted to have upon that particular subject. The natural inference was, that it was too precious in their esteem to be suffered to be exposed to the Sirocco of his eloquence, lest it should be incurably scorched, or wholly destroyed by the blast. There was something in this of political ingratitude, and obviously no small portion of folly and indiscretion, for it impressed a general belief in the country that the minority, instead of viewing the French question as a matter of indifference, or even as one of calm inquiry and deliberation, had at once and so heartily adopted its spirit, as to proceed to the last extremities with one of the heads of their body, sooner than hear him treat it with reprobation.

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[*] Burke himself wittily observed at a subsequent time, that the topic of France, though open to every one else, was by the opposition *taboo'ed,* to him—by what rite of authority, or superstition, he could not divine.

There are a variety of other reasons which tell strongly in favour of Mr. Burke. Far from being the first to broach the topic as a provocative to quarrel, he had, on the contrary, studiously avoided it in this and the preceding sessions, until introduced by the very persons who now professed to wish to avoid the subject. It was obviously his interest not to disagree with those with whom he had been so long connected, and more especially at this moment, when it was believed, in consequence of words which fell from the King on the dispute with Russia, that they were likely to come into power.* He had already explicitly declared his intention to separate from the dearest friends he possessed, who should give countenance to the revolutionary doctrines then afloat, and the breach with Mr. Sheridan proved that this was no idle threat. He doubtless felt displeased that his general principles should be, if not misrepresented, at least so far misapplied, as to become the means of charging him with dereliction of principle. He might be angry that this should be done by one who had so long been his friend, and who made it his chief boast even at the moment of contest that he was his disciple. He could not be well pleased that this disciple should condemn his book without ceremony, as an attack on all free governments. He could not be highly conciliated by that friend withdrawing from him, as had been the case for several preceding years, much of that public confidence which he had hitherto reposed in him; for as little similarity existed in their private pursuits, they were political friends or they were nothing; and the withholding of confidence on such subjects became, in fact, a tacit dissolution of the compact by which they were united.

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* Mr. Fox had himself communicated to Burke a few days before a speech made by the King at the levee to the effect, that if the government could not be properly conducted by Mr. Pitt it might be done by others, for *he* was not wedded to him.

But in addition to these considerations, there were in the cause of disunion, circumstances which rendered it quite impossible they could continue on the same terms as before. The dispute was not about a private or trivial, but a great constitutional matter which superseded all minor considerations,—not a hackneyed or speculative topic on which they might amicably differ and pass on to the consideration of others on which they agreed, but one in its consequences involving the very existence of the state. It was a question wholly new; it was one which agitated almost every man in the kingdom; it was constantly and progressively before the eyes of Parliament; it met the leaders at every turn in debate, and in some form or another mingled in every discussion of fact or principle. It was in itself full of difficulties, of jagged points and sharp angles, against which neither of them could rub without feeling some degree of irritation; and it was one on which from the first each seemed to have staked his whole reputation for political wisdom against the other; Mr. Fox with all the enthusiasm of a generous, confiding, and unwary man; Mr. Burke with the penetration of a profound philosopher and the calculating sagacity of a practical statesman. In support of their opinions both were quite as vehement as the case required; the one pushing on, or being pushed by, Opposition, to apologize for the misdeeds of the French Revolution; the other outstripping the van of the Ministry in their bitter reprobation.

Constant contention such as this promised to be, "hand to hand and foot to foot," as Mr. Burke expressed his determination to contend, could lead, especially with an old associate, only to coldness; and from coldness to alienation, from alienation to dislike, the steps are few, and quick, and certain. A breach, therefore, sooner or later appeared to be inevitable. Whether it ought not to have taken place by degrees and with less of publicity, is merely matter of opinion and at best is of little consequence. An open and decisive expression of his mind (to a fault) had hitherto characterized Mr. Burke upon all occasions, and he probably thought the same mode of conduct now more honourable in itself, and more calculated to impress upon the country a sense of the magnitude of its danger, and the sincerity of his conviction that the danger was near.

From the moment indeed that Mr. Fox pronounced such decided panegyrics upon the French Constitution, and particularly on the 15th of April, when Mr. Burke, as already noticed, was prevented from replying to it by the clamour of his own party, a rupture between them distinctly appeared at hand. The former long afterwards used to regret the interruption the latter had then received, saying that though the conflict between them might have been hotter and fiercer at the moment, it would probably have left no unpleasant feelings behind. In fact, the very next morning after this unhandsome conduct a general alarm at the consequences of it spread through the party. Several conciliatory explanations were offered to Mr. Burke, and some apologies, while many who agreed in Mr. Fox's opinions did not hesitate to condemn him for imprudence in expressing them, though it is equally true that he had been urged to the measure by those very persons, and for not having already done so, two or three of the number had been tempted to say he was deficient in firmness.

On the other hand some of Mr. Burke's personal friends and the connexions of the Duke of Portland, though they thought nearly as he did of the proceedings in France, wished him nevertheless to pass over the opinions and the challenges of Mr. Fox and Mr. Sheridan in silence. This he urged was impossible. He was willing to forget, he said, the total want of consideration and respect shown to himself on several recent occasions, and the pretty plain abuse directed against his writings, yet in addition to these, without any overt act of his to cause such a proceeding, he had been thrice within a week pointedly dared to the discussion, and standing as he did, pledged to the House and to the country upon the subject in a manner which no other Member was, it would look like political cowardice in him to shrink from the contest. Besides, he thought Mr. Fox's opinions of great weight in the country, and should not be permitted to circulate through it uncontradicted. He was further impelled, he added, by an imperious sense of public duty, which he considered paramount to all other considerations. These reasons, however, were deemed scarcely sufficient by his friends, though this did not relax his determination.

In the mean time he was informed that the adherents of Mr. Fox had determined to interrupt him on any allusions to French affairs, by urging the point of order; and that gentleman himself, in company with a friend, waited upon him to request that the discussion might be postponed till another opportunity, which Mr. Burke, in answer, pointed out was not likely to occur again during any other business of the Session. To convince Mr. Fox, however, that nothing personal or offensive would proceed from him, he stated explicitly what he meant to say, mentioning the heads of his arguments and the limitations he designed to impose on himself; an instance of candour which Mr. Fox returned by relating the favourable expressions of himself just alluded to, recently uttered by the King. The interview, therefore, though not quite satisfactory, excited no hostile feelings; on the contrary, they walked down to the House together, and together entered it, but found that Mr. Sheridan had moved to postpone the re-commitment of the bill until after the Easter holidays.

As a proof, however, of the spirit which actuated the late associates of Burke, one of them,* as if fated to fan afresh the now almost extinguished flame of dissension, on this very evening took occasion to observe that the affair of the Quebec Government had been improperly treated, by involving the consideration of the general principles of government and the constitutions of other countries; on which occasion insinuations had been thrown out against the opinions of some of the gentlemen with whom he acted. If, therefore, he found the minister, or *any other right honourable gentleman*, wander from the strict discussion of the matter, he should call him to order and take the sense of the House upon it. The allusion to Mr. Burke was palpable, and so he considered it, but nevertheless did not rise to reply.

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* Mr. M. A. Taylor.

Mr. Fox, with more candour and consideration, admitted, that, in forming a government for a colony, some attention should be paid to the general principles of all governments; and he himself had during this session alluded, perhaps too often, to the French Revolution; he had also spoken much on the government of the American States, because they were in the vicinity of Canada; but on the Quebec bill he had only uttered one silly levity,* not worth recollection, relative to the French Revolution; he meant an allusion to the extinction of nobility in France, and its revival in Canada. He was not in the habit of concealing his opinions; neither did he retract any which he had heretofore advanced on this subject; and when the Quebec bill came again to be discussed, though, from the respect he entertained for some of his friends, he should be sorry to differ from them, yet he would deliver his opinions fearlessly. Mr. Powys remarked, in return, that the debate had turned irregularly both on retrospect and anticipation, and hinted that Mr. Fox should have followed the example of Mr. Burke, in writing, rather than in speaking there, of the French Revolution.

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* This was, that "nobility stunk in the nostrils of the people of America," and much more to that effect. The phrase itself was not original, but had been used by Burke many years before in allusion to a former unpopular House of Commons.

Mr. Burke, in a very affecting manner, assured the House that nothing depressed him more—nothing had ever more affected him in body and mind—than the thought of meeting his friend as an adversary and antagonist. After noticing the anticipation just suggested, and the observations accompanying it, he declared his sentiments, that in framing a new constitution, it became necessary to refer to principles of government and examples of other constitutions, because a material part of every political question was to see to what extent certain principles had been adopted, and how they had succeeded in other places. His opinions on government he presumed not to be unknown, as gentlemen had lately become fond of quoting him in that House; and the more he considered the French Constitution, the more sorry he was to see it viewed with any degree of favour. Once in the preceding session he had thought himself under the necessity of speaking very fully upon the subject; *but since that time he had never mentioned it either directly or indirectly; no man, therefore, could charge him with having provoked the conversation that had passed.* He should, however, give his opinion on particular principles of government in the future progress of the Quebec bill. He acquitted with much candour his right honourable friend of any personal offence to himself in the interruption he had lately experienced (April 15), in attempting to answer his recent panegyric on France: and he finished by saying, that, should he and his friend differ, he desired it to be recollected, that however dear he considered his friendship, there was something still dearer in his mind—the love of his country; neither was he stimulated to the part he should take by any connexion with people in office; for whatever they knew of his political sentiments, they had learned from him, not he from them.

Such was the precursor of the day of quarrel. Mr. Fox we see had given the challenge, and yet was dissatisfied that it should be accepted; while his friends, proceeding a point further, boldly declared their determination to interrupt any one who should advert to it. Mr. Burke's observations in reply are, as we see, expressed in the most conciliatory spirit, though firm; and the threat used, made it more imperative upon him to resolve not to be bullied into silence. During the interval between this and the 6th of May, the same determination of calling him to order was repeatedly hinted in the opposition newspapers, and their abuse of him otherwise indicated something of premeditated hostility.

That the behaviour of this body to him in the whole of the business was unfair, hostile, and imprudent, if not meriting harsher names, has been generally agreed. That of Mr. Fox it is also difficult to explain. In treating of a new constitution for a colony which embraced English, and French, and American interests, it was perfectly in order for he himself to advert to, and to contrast, their respective constitutions with that of the one proposed; but it seemed strange that the same privilege should be denied to another member, of at least equal talents, and of the same party, because he drew a different conclusion. Why, it was pertinently asked, should Mr. Fox and Mr. Sheridan have free license to extol the French revolution or constitution, when speaking upon the Quebec or any other bill, while to Mr. Burke, and Mr. Burke alone, the topic of France should be wholly forbidden? It formed also matter for surprise that the former gentleman should profess such warm admiration of the French revolution, when confessedly not one beneficial result had arisen from it to that country, or seemed likely to arise either to it or to any other. If this admiration were sincere, what are we to conclude of his political wisdom and prudence? If it were not, the inference is equally against his political honesty. It is no more than justice to him to state, however, that what he panegyrised in the gross, he condemned almost uniformly in the detail, and much more in private conversation than he could be brought to express in parliamentary debate. It is on record, likewise, that though on two occasions he applauded by name, and in the hearing of the whole House, the new French *Constitution*, as "the most stupendous and glorious edifice of liberty which had been erected on the foundation of human integrity in any time or country," he afterwards, when pushed by Mr. Burke, explained away his meaning by saying that it applied to the Revolution,—not to the Constitution. His sentiments seemed, in fact, more than once doubtful and wavering as to the line of conduct it was most proper for him to pursue; it has been always believed that he was urged on by sinister influence, and an innate passion for popularity, to take that side which he did; and that, having irrecoverably lost Mr. Burke by going too far, he was obliged to go further in order to retain Mr. Sheridan, who, it is said, exacted an explicit declaration of his opinions on this head as the price of his continued exertions in Parliament. It has been asserted, and even by some of the Members who continued to adhere to him—that he would ultimately have been brought over to Burke's views, had not the precipitate separation of the latter affected his pride too keenly; for that after the publicity of the quarrel, if he should relinquish his opinions, even if wrong, in order to effect a reconciliation, it would look so much like weakness, as probably to lose him the lead in his party, if not in the public esteem. It is likewise pretty certain that Burke himself expected to have made a convert of him, even after that dissension. Yet to a distant observer these sanguine conclusions were not at all probable. Mr. Fox perfectly knew, and the idea haunted his mind, that by joining administration he must become a secondary personage to Mr. Pitt, who could not be expected voluntarily to surrender a full half of that power which he enjoyed as a whole; while, on the other hand, by not accepting of office, but merely showing himself in Parliament to re-echo the voice of Ministry, or by seceding altogether from business, he equally ran the hazard of losing something of his public importance. There was the further consideration whether even, if admitted to an equality of power, it was probable he and Mr. Pitt should agree in their general measures. A calculation of these chances, and perhaps a real belief, however erroneous, that he was serving the cause of liberty by remaining at the head of Opposition, determined him to keep his station. Far be it from the wish of the present writer to "lean upon the memory of a great man;" but bare justice to another equally great, and, in some respects, greater, requires that truth should be opposed to that multiplied, unwearied, and still-continued abuse and misrepresentation applied to him in consequence of this schism.*

An anecdote of this memorable evening, related by a Member who had adopted Mr. Fox's opinions, evinces, contrary to the inference he draws, that Mr. Burke, instead of displaying the calmness of one who had come down to the House prepared for a rupture, felt all the irritation which unpremeditated quarrels always produce, and the harsh reception he had experienced was so much calculated to excite.

"The most powerful feelings," says Mr. Curwen,† "were manifested on the adjournment of the House. Whilst I was waiting for my carriage Mr. Burke came up to me and requested, as the night was wet, I would set him down—I could not refuse—though I confess I felt a reluctance in complying. As soon as the carriage-door was shut, he complimented me on my being no friend to the revolutionary doctrines of the French, on which he spoke with great warmth for a few minutes, when he paused to afford me an opportunity of approving the view he had taken of those measures in the House. Former experience had taught me the consequences of differing from his opinions, yet at the moment I could not help feeling disinclined to disguise my sentiments. Mr. Burke, catching hold of the check-string, furiously exclaimed, 'You are one of these people! set me down!' With some difficulty I restrained him;—we had then reached Charing Cross—a silence ensued, which was preserved till we reached his house in Gerrard Street, when he hurried out of the carriage without speaking, and thus our intercourse ended."

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* For a more detailed account of it, and of the circumstances by which it was preceded and accompanied (the only full and fair one indeed which exists), see Dodsley's Annual Register for 1791.

† Travels in Ireland, vol. ii.

It is to the credit of Mr. Burke, however, that when his own personal and political interests were at stake, he displayed nothing of this spirit of irritation, as the following anecdote, recorded by the same gentleman, testifies, and it is only one among many others:—" On the first question of the Regency I differed from Mr. Fox: when the division was proceeding, Mr. Burke espied me remaining in my seat; he turned about, and repeatedly called on me, but as I obeyed not the summons, a laugh at his expense ensued; though he was evidently displeased, I must do him the justice to say he did not resent it."

The House having adjourned till the 11th, Mr. Fox again explained away his opinions against aristocracy, which Mr. Pitt rather sarcastically said, he was glad to hear, for he and every one else had formed a different estimate of his meaning, from what had fallen from him the evening they had last assembled. Mr. Burke spoke at length on the question, and on the situation in which he stood with his party. Mr. Fox again assailed him with some censures and personalities, at the same time saying, that if he wished to return to his party, it would receive him, respect him, and love him as heretofore. Of this censure and invitation Mr. Burke, in a rejoinder, took scarcely any notice, neither did he utter a syllable of recrimination; so that in the whole of this affair the loss of temper would seem to have been quite as great in the former gentleman as in the latter.

It was not one of the least remarkable events of the period, that the very next measure which occupied the House of Commons was one brought forward by Mr. Fox, which, though daily in the habit of dropping hints upon inconsistency, seemed calculated to render his own more particularly marked, as in the late quarrel he had expressly alluded to difference of opinion with Mr. Burke on this very point—to whom, in fact, the present undertaking was a strong though unavowed acknowledgment of the superiority of his views at an early period of his political life, on a great constitutional matter. This measure was the bill for empowering juries to try the questions both of law and fact in prosecutions for libel.

It has been already noticed, that a bill for this purpose was introduced by Mr. Dowdeswell, in January 1771, in consequence of the discussions which arose from the verdict of the Jury in Almon's trial for publishing Junius's Letter to the King. This bill, Mr. Burke, as the moving spirit of his party, not only suggested but drew up with his own hand, and supported in the House by an able speech. Ministry however resisted it, and among others Mr. Fox pointedly. Lord Shelburne and his friends gave it a hollow support; Mr. George Grenville and his party scouted it, and Mr. Horne Tooke attacked it anonymously in the newspapers, though all these persons formed sections of Opposition—so much were the judgment and constitutional knowledge of Mr. Burke even then in advance of those of his ablest contemporaries. This ungracious reception probably prevented him from renewing it. Mr. Fox, at the present moment, seized upon the question as a useful prop to his falling popularity, and though it is an understood rule for one Member of Parliament, before he seizes upon the proposition of another, to communicate with him on the subject, Mr. Fox did not think this compliment necessary although no breach had then (February) taken place between them: he said nothing to Mr. Burke, made no apology, acknowledged no obligation, but adopted the spirit and substance, and, as nearly as possible, the words of the bill of 1771, as his own exclusive property.* It is difficult to suppose he did not know

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* For the information of the reader the chief heads of each are subjoined.

Jury Bill of 1771.	Jury Bill of 1791.
I. Whereas doubts and controversies have arisen concerning the rights of Jurors to try the whole matter charged in indictments, and informations for seditious and other libels; for settling and clearing the same in time to come, be it enacted, &c. that from and after, &c., the jurors who shall be duly	I. Whereas doubts have arisen, whether on the trial of an indictment or information for the making or publishing any libel, where an issue or issues are joined between the King and the defendant or defendants, on the plea of not guilty pleaded, it be competent to the jury impanelled to try

who the real author was, though this may be possible; but the bill itself, from having opposed it, and from his late reference to it, he could not well have forgotten. Whatever merit, therefore, be in this celebrated measure, and there is unquestionably much, the larger proportion of it, beyond all doubt, belongs to Mr. Burke.

His labours at the commencement of this troubled session had been equally arduous, though less personally agitating than those which occurred towards its close. An important constitutional question was mooted, whether the impeachment had not abated by the dissolution of Parliament in 1790? He maintained, with great vigour and ability, that it did not; Mr. Fox, Mr. Pitt, Mr. Dundas, Mr. Ad-

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impanelled and sworn to try the issue between the King and the defendant, upon any indictment or information for a seditious libel, or a libel under any other denomination or description, shall, to all intents and purposes, be held and reputed, in law and in right, competent to try every part of the matter laid or charged in the said indictment or information, comprehending the criminal intention of the defendant, and evil tendency of the libel charged, as well as the mere fact of the publication thereof; and the application by inuendo of blanks, initial letters, pictures, and other devices, any law or usage to the contrary notwithstanding.

II. Provided that nothing in the act be construed to prevent or restrain the judges or justices before whom such issues shall be tried, from instructing the jurors concerning the law upon

the same, to give their verdict upon the whole matter in issue; be it therefore declared and enacted, &c. &c., that on every such trial, the jury sworn to try the issue may give a general verdict of guilty or not guilty upon the whole matter put in issue upon such indictment or information, and shall not be required or directed by the Court or Judge before whom such indictment or information shall be tried, to find the defendant or defendants guilty, merely on the proof of the publication by such defendant or defendants, of the paper charged to be a libel, and of the sense ascribed to the same on such indictment or information.

II. Provided always, that on every such trial the court or judge before whom such indictment or information shall be tried, shall, according to their or his discretion, give their or dington the Speaker, Mr. Adam, and the chief talent of both Houses, supporting the same views. Nearly all the lawyers, however, were of an opposite opinion, and among them Mr. Erskine, who laboured hard to support this unconstitutional doctrine. This circumstance drew from the chief manager many sarcastic remarks, especially after Mr. Erskine, who had been professionally retained in a cause on the other side, and who of course was not free from bias on the question, had remarked that they were not *at home* in that House, when Mr. Burke said, he believed they were not; " they were birds of a dif-

the matter so in issue, as fully as may be done in other misdemeanors, where the jurors do and ought to try the whole matter; nor to restrain the jurors from finding the matter special, if the law to them shall seem difficult and doubtful.	his opinion of directions to the jury on the matter in issue between the King and the defendant or defendants, in like manner as in other criminal cases.
III. Provided also, that nothing herein contained shall be construed to take from the defendant, after verdict found, the right of laying such evidence before the Court in which such verdict was found, as may tend to mitigation or extenuation of his said offence, as has been usually practised before this act.	III. Provided also, that nothing herein contained shall extend, or be construed to extend, to prevent the jury from finding a special verdict in their discretion, as in other criminal cases.
	IV. Provided also, that in case the jury shall find the defendant or defendants guilty, it shall and may be lawful for the said defendant or defendants to move in arrest of judgment on such ground and in such manner as by law he or they might have done before the passing of this act, any thing herein contained to the contrary notwithstanding.

ferent feather, and only perched in that House on their flight to another—only resting their tender pinions there for a while, yet ever fluttering to be gone to the region of coronets; like the Hibernian in the ship, they cared not how soon she foundered, because they were only passengers—their best bower anchor was always cast in the House of Lords." In another sentence he expressed a wish "to see the country governed by law, but not by lawyers." On the 14th of February, when Mr. Erskine, who had already sustained many of his biting sarcasms, complained of the length of the trial, Mr. Burke, after an able defence of the managers, upon whom certainly no blame rested in the opinions both of Ministry and Opposition, asked "whether the learned gentleman remembered, that if the trial had continued three years, the oppressions had continued for 20 years? whether, after all, there were hour-glasses for measuring the grievances of mankind? or whether those whose ideas never travelled beyond a *nisi prius* cause, were better calculated to ascertain what ought to be the length of an impeachment, than a rabbit who breeds six times in a year had to judge of the time proper for the gestation of an elephant?" Mr. Fox was equally severe in his strictures upon the legal profession.

The other chief public measures in which Mr. Burke took part were, by an eloquent speech, seconded by Mr. Fox and Mr. Pitt, in support of Mr. Mitford's bill, granting indulgence to protesting Roman Catholic Dissenters, or those who denied the Pope's supremacy in temporal matters; on the slave trade; on the Russian armament; and a very eloquent one (May 12th) on Mr. Grey's motion for a committee to inquire into the effects of imprisonment for debt—a practice to which his humane propensities were at all times keenly alive; and the legislature of the present day by passing the Insolvent Act seems to have adopted the spirit of his ideas.

"They had, he said, not only their prisons full, but they had a commonwealth of debtors, a commonwealth of prisoners; a commonwealth as numerous as many that had existed in ancient history. These prisoners were not distinguished from slaves, but actually were slaves, existing in a country valuing itself on its laws, and boasting of its freedom, but in which they endured a greater portion of slavery than ever had been exercised by the most despotic powers. It certainly was a blemish in our law that it produced all the effects of the most abject slavery. It was a paradox strange and irreconcileable. One thing he wished to suggest, which was, that it was not to be held that this business was in all cases connected with commerce. The contracting of debts often happened among the lower classes of men in the common transactions of life, and were deemed civil suits founded on false credit. Commerce was too cautious to act upon such a fallacious principle; in cases of commerce the creditor only wished to secure the *cessio bonorum.* Not only the trading part of the community, therefore, but every man in the kingdom was deeply interested in the inquiry."

In the early part of the summer he paid a visit to Margate, for the benefit of the warm salt-water baths for Mrs. Burke, whence an anecdote is related indicative of his strict sense of propriety in the performance of religious duties. At church, one day, he was unexpectedly saluted with a political sermon, which, though complimentary to his own views of public affairs, was so little suited in his opinion to the place, that he displayed unequivocal symptoms of disapprobation by rising frequently during its continuance, taking his hat as if to depart, and reseating himself with an air of evident chagrin. "Surely," said he, on another occasion, "the church is a place where one day's truce may be allowed to the dissensions and animosities of mankind."

During the stay of the family here, his niece, Miss French, who had come from Ireland to reside with them, was accustomed to relate a little incident of the ingenuity and knowledge of small things possessed by her uncle, being unexpectedly put to the test. A ball being to take place at the rooms, the ladies, who had been little in public in consequence of Mrs. Burke's indisposition, became anxious to ascertain the prevailing colours and modes in that then very fashionable place of resort, but were sadly puzzled to find a fit messenger to dispatch upon this important errand. Mr. Burke overhearing the conversation, immediately removed the difficulty by jocularly offering himself as *Embassador extraordinary* on the occasion, and when he found that much merriment was excited by the proposal, and some remarks made upon his unfitness for a mission requiring a special knowledge of caps, dresses, flounces, tuckers, and all the paraphernalia of female dress, good-humouredly replied, "Come, come, I know more of these things than you give me credit for; my knowledge must not be undervalued until it is tried." To the rooms accordingly he went duly instructed by the ladies, made his remarks, according to his instructions, and returned with a humourous, and, as it proved, very correct account of all he had observed.

Toward the end of August Sir Joshua Reynolds published a print of him, engraved by Benedetti, from the best portrait painted by himself in 1775; underneath it the President caused to be engraved the following lines from the fifth book of Paradise Lost—the conduct of the good Abdiel; a strong allusion, it will be perceived, to the recent political quarrel, and expressive of his own sense of the proceedings of Opposition, as well as of their treatment, on that occasion, of his friend:—

"So spake the fervent Angel, but his zeal
None seconded, as out of season judged,
Or singular and rash ——————
—————————————— unmoved,
Unshaken, unseduced, unterrified;
His loyalty he kept, his love, his zeal;
Nor number nor example with him wrought
To swerve from truth, or change his constant mind
Though single. From amid'st them forth he passed
Long way through hostile scorn, which he sustain'd
Superior, nor of violence fear'd aught;
And with retorted scorn his back he turn'd
On those proud towers to swift destruction doom'd."

Mr. Burke, whose humility was as distinguished as any other of his qualities, and who did not see the plate until a considerable number of impressions had been worked off, urged the strongest remonstrances against the application of such lines to him;

and insisted, almost as the condition of continued friendship, that they should be obliterated, or the plate and all the impressions from it which had not been distributed, destroyed. Sir Joshua submitted to this determination of his friend with great reluctance, and it was so unrelentingly carried into effect that very few are now to be found. So far did Mr. Burke carry this feeling, squeamish or affected as some may consider it, that whenever he met with one of these prints in the house of a friend, he used to beg it as a particular favour, in exchange for one without the lines, and it was no sooner obtained than destroyed.

At this period also it may be remarked, that the war of caricatures which had been carried on against him for many years with some wit and address, as well as against Mr. Fox and others of the Opposition, now turned in some degree in his favour. The Jesuit's dress, by which and by his spectacles he had hitherto been commonly represented was omitted, and he was afterwards chiefly drawn as confounding or exposing in debate the apologists of the Revolution. A collection of these graphic though fleeting memorials of the whims or satire of the day, made by an admirer of Mr. Burke and an acquaintance of the writer, affords some amusing scenes at this period of time; the likenesses preserved in them are as faithful as caricature pretends to be, and some of his oratorical attitudes are very correctly caught.

This pictorial wit, however, even when most hostile to him, far from inflicting pain, frequently became a source of amusement to himself and his friends, as the following anecdote will testify. Some years since, when dining at Lord Tankerville's, the conversation turning on caricatures, a gentleman remarked, that he believed Mr. Fox had been oftener exhibited in that way than any other man in the kingdom—"I beg pardon," said Mr. Burke, "but I think I may put in my claim to a greater number and variety of exhibitions in that line than my honourable friend." "I hope," observed Mr. Fox, "they give you no uneasiness." "Not in the least," was the reply, "I have, I believe, seen them all, laughed at them all, and pretty well remember them all; and if you feel inclined to be amused, and it would not be trespassing on the indulgence of the company, I can repeat the different characters in which I have figured in the shops, obedient to the mimic powers of the pencil." Accordingly he began, and detailed them all in so humourous a manner as to keep the table in continual laughter during his description.

CHAPTER III.

Anecdote of Burke's unobtrusive spirit.—Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs.—French Emigrants.—Letter to Mr. (now Baron) Smith.—Writings on French Affairs, and on the Roman Catholic Claims.—Sir Joshua Reynolds.—Parliamentary Business.—Letter on the Death of Mr. Shackleton.—War with France.—Letter of Mr. R. Burke, Jun. to Mr. Smith.

Allusions having been made in this work to that unobtrusive spirit, which, whether called humility or modesty, constantly actuated Mr. Burke in restraining his partial and admiring friends from giving to the world through the customary channels, those biographical notices and domestic details and anecdotes so well calculated to exhibit him in an amiable light, and many of which are necessarily lost, an instance of the fact may be given, though it occurred some time before the period at which we are now arrived.

One of these friends, the very oldest and one of the very warmest he possessed, finding his name to occupy so frequently and so highly a large share of the public attention, conceived it might gratify general curiosity, and pay a debt at once to eminent merit and long friendship, by communicating more at large a few of those personal and domestic circumstances which impart the only true knowledge of character, and which his opportunities for observation enabled him very well to supply. This was accordingly done, and inserted in a newspaper of the day. Here the piece met the eye of the orator, and though no more than justice had been rendered by it to the characters of himself, his lady, and family in the way of eulogy, the circumstance caused him no small degree of annoyance, and even unusual irritation. Suspecting the quarter whence it proceeded by the information it contained, he instantly wrote to the presumed author, reprehending him most severely for taking the unwarrantable liberty of intruding what he termed his "bed and board" upon the public eye—of impertinently meddling with what the world had no concern whatever—of doing that which the pen of malice and faction however busy with his political character, had never dared to touch—and for this unjustifiable officiousness in the garb of praise, renouncing almost in positive terms, any further acquaintance or correspondence.

Surprised, and beyond measure hurt, at a result so little to be anticipated, the unlucky friend returned a dejected, though pathetic and extremely well-written reply, confessing his offence, urging that though perhaps open to the charge of officiousness, he could not divine that so venial an error should excite so much displeasure; that in doing as he did, he had no other motive than to evince the sincere love and honest admiration for his talents and character which had ever been the ruling passions of his breast—and if for this cause he was to be deprived of the honour of his future correspondence and regard, a regard springing up from their most boyish days, and never yet for a moment interrupted, he should regret it as the heaviest misfortune of his life, but if the determination was finally taken as the tenor of his letter seemed to imply, he bade him sorrowfully indeed and unwillingly on his part, a long, but an affectionate and respectful farewell. This appeal completely subdued Burke. He wrote off instantly a letter of apology much more humble in its terms than that of his friend, deprecating the loss of his regard, desiring to recall his hasty and improper communication, and to bury in oblivion its harsh tone, and sincerely begging his forgiveness for displaying towards him even for a moment that constitutional irritability which he so well knew was a failing of his nature, but which he should take care should never again be permitted to interfere with their long and he hoped unfailing friendship.

His early and esteemed acquaintance, Mr. Shackleton, of Ballitore, who visited London very frequently in the spring, to attend the annual meetings of the Friends' Society, spent a considerable portion of his time either at Butler's Court or at the house of the family in town, and when business or other claims upon his time carried him elsewhere, Mr. Burke always regretted the disappointment. The following is one of his notes to him, written in the early part of this year.

"MY DEAR SHACKLETON,

"I shall be most happy to see you. My wife will be in town on this day; at least I hope so. Why can't you dine with us also? I have refused two invitations this morning to keep myself for you.

"Yours most truly,
"EDMUND BURKE.

"Friday."

A few days after the rupture with Mr. Fox, a paragraph having appeared in the Morning Chronicle * stating that the great body of the Whig party having decided on the late dispute between Mr. Fox and Mr. Burke in favour of the purer tenets of the former, the latter was in consequence to retire from Parliament. This sentence of ejectment from his seat, though wholly gratuitous, and if not meant as a slight to him, probably intended to mislead the public mind on the unanimity of the party, only reiterated a declaration which he had some time before made, of intending to retire from the House of Commons whenever the impeachment should terminate. As a trick, therefore, it was unworthy of his notice. But the intimation conveyed in the first portion of the paragraph relative to the purer Whiggism of the member for Westminster, being re-echoed in and out of Parliament by persons attached to him, an answer became necessary in the opinion of his antagonist, in order to test what Whig principles really were, by comparing those avowed by Mr. Fox and his friends with those maintained at the revolution, the era of their supposed greatest purity.

For this purpose appeared towards the end of the summer, " An Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs." In this pamphlet, which is couched in a

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* May 12, 1791.—" The great and firm body of the Whigs of England, true to their principles, have decided on the dispute between Mr. Fox and Mr. Burke; and the former is declared to have maintained the pure doctrines by which they are bound together, and upon which they have invariably acted. The consequence is that Mr. Burke retires from Parliament."

very calm tone, and written in the third person, he successfully accomplishes his purpose of proving that his doctrines were in perfect coincidence with the allowed standard of correctness, and that from these he had not swerved. He defends his conduct in the whole of the recent dispute, with a moderation of manner and a statement of circumstances, simple and undeniable in themselves, which perhaps preclude any sufficient answer being given to him. He maintains his consistency as one of the most valuable parts of his public character, and retraces the general complexion of his exertions, as well as the very words made use of on several important occasions, in order to prove their perfect conformity with those advanced in that work (the Reflections) which the party had taken so much pains to condemn. The chief reasons for writing it are given briefly but forcibly, and among them are the following:

"He proposed to prove that the present state of things in France is not a transient evil, productive, as some have too favourably represented it, of a lasting good, but that the present evil is only the means of producing future and (if that were possible) worse evils. That it is not an undigested, imperfect, and crude scheme of liberty, which may gradually be mellowed and ripened into an orderly and social freedom, but that it is so fundamentally wrong as to be utterly incapable of correcting itself by any length of time, or of being formed into any mode of polity of which a member of the House of Commons could publicly declare his approbation." The decisive boldness of this and many similar predictions and their subsequent exact fulfilment, will often astonish the reader in the writings of this extraordinary man.

As an exemplification of his power to assume any style which suited the whim or the necessity of the moment, the present pamphlet is not unworthy of notice. It resembles most nearly the "Short Account of a late short Administration;" the one a statement of facts illustrative of the career of a ministry, the other explanatory of his own; and both so different from his impassioned style of writing as to present scarcely a feature of resemblance.

Few things affected his sensibility more about this period, and indeed for some time before, than the hordes of emigrants driven from opulence and respectability in their native country, to poverty and obscurity in this, by means of the secret menace or open violence of the sanguinary characters who exercised the municipal authority in a large portion of France. For the relief of the poorer class, besides giving as much in the way of relief as his own means permitted, he exerted all his influence by raising private subscriptions among his friends, by appeals to the public,*

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* The following plain and dispassionate appeal to public liberality in favour of the distressed body of French Clergy, drawn up by Mr. Burke, and distributed in September, 1792, produced a handsome subscription; it is given here on account of not appearing in any other volume connected with him.

"It is well known that a cruel and inhuman persecution is now and hath for some time past been carried on by a faction of atheists, infidels, and other persons of evil principles and dispositions, calling themselves philosophers, against our brethren the Christians of France. In this persecution, a vast multitude of persons of all ages, sexes, and conditions, and particularly the and afterwards by applications to government. To others of higher rank, his house and table were open

clergy, have suffered in a grievous manner. Many of them have been, with circumstances of great barbarity and outrage, put to death, and their bodies, according to the customs lately prevalent in France, treated with savage indignities.

" Several women, of whom some were of rank, dedicated to religion, in the peculiar exercise of a sublime charity, by an attendance on the sick in hospitals, have been stripped naked, and in public barbarously scourged. Thousands of other respectable religious women, mostly engaged in the education of persons of their own sex, and other laudable occupations, have been deprived of their estates, and expelled from their houses, in which they had purchased a property by the portions given to them by their parents. These respectable women are many of them far advanced in years, and labouring under great infirmities; the major part are at, or near, the declining period of life, and all are utterly inconversant in the affairs of the world, and in the means of procuring themselves any subsistence. They, by whose charity they scantily subsisted, under every species of insult, vexation, and oppression, before their expulsion from their houses by the philosophic faction, are now, for the most part, themselves obliged to fly their country, or are reduced to almost an equal degree of penury with those they had been accustomed to relieve.

" Many thousand of the parochial clergy, after having been driven from their livings and houses, and robbed of their legal property, have been deprived of the wretched pensions which had been by public faith stipulated to be paid to them when that robbery and expulsion were ordered; and have been exposed to perish by famine. Others, in very great numbers, have been arbitrarily thrown into unwholesome prisons, and kept there a long time without any redress, against all law, and against the direct orders of the supreme magistrate of their new constitution, whose duty it was to see that no illegal punishment should be executed. At length, after a tedious imprisonment, (suffered with a mildness, a patience, and a constancy which have not been denied by their very persecutors, whose rage and malice, however, these examples of Christian virtue have failed in the least degree to mitigate,) the municipal bodies, or the factious clubs who appoint and guide until a more permanent residence could be procured for them; and in performing this work of christian

them, have by their proper authority transported into a foreign kingdom a considerable number of these prisoners in slave ships. At the same time, all the rest of the clergy, who by lying hid, or flying from place to place, have hitherto escaped confinement; and endeavoured in private to worship God according to their consciences, and the ancient fundamental laws of their country, are hunted out like wild beasts; and a decree of the National Assembly itself has now ordered them, in terms the most insulting and atrocious ever used by a public assembly, to quit the kingdom within 15 days, without the least preparation and provision, or, together with those imprisoned, and yet not exiled, to be instantly transported to the most wild, uncultivated, and pestiferous part of the whole globe; that is to Guiana, in South America.

" All this has been done without calling upon one single person of the many thousands subject to this severe and iniquitous sentence, as well as to all the cruel preceding oppressions, to answer any specified offence or charge whatsoever. Several of the said clergy, some of whom are aged and infirm persons, to avoid imprisonment and the other various vexations above-mentioned, and in many cases to prevent the commission of further crimes, in the destruction of their respective flocks for their attachment to their pastors, have been obliged to fly their country, and to take refuge in the British dominions, where their general exemplary behaviour has greatly added to the compassion excited by their unmerited sufferings. * * * * *

" It is confidently hoped that a difference in religious persuasion will not shut the hearts of the English public against their suffering brethren, the christians of France; but that all true sons of the church of England, all true subjects of our Saviour, Jesus Christ, who are not ashamed, in this time of apostacy or prevarication, to confess their obedience to, and imitation of their divine master in their charity to their suffering brethren of all denominations—it is hoped, that all persons who from the imbred sentiments of a generous nature cultivate the virtues of humanity—it is hoped, that all persons attached to the cause of religious and civil liberty as it is connected with law and order—it is hoped, that all these will be gratified in having an opportunity of conbeneficence and charity it ought to be mentioned to his honour, that some of the pecuniary difficulties

tributing to the support of these worthy sufferers in the cause of honour, virtue, loyalty, and religion." (Mention is then made of the subscriptions for the people of Lisbon, after the earthquake, and that for the French prisoners of war, in 1761.)

"We trust that such of our countrymen as were then alive are still mindful of their former virtue; and that the generation which has succeeded is emulous of the good actions of their ancestors. The gentlemen for whom this subscription is proposed, have never been guilty of any evil design against us. They have fled for refuge to this sanctuary. They are here under the sacred protection of hospitality.—Englishmen who cherish the virtue of hospitality, and who do not wish an hard and scanty construction of its laws, will not think it enough that such guests are in safety from the violence of their own countrymen, while they perish from our neglect.

"These respectable sufferers are much greater objects of compassion than soldiers and mariners, men professionally formed to hardships, and the vicissitudes of life—our sufferers are men of peaceful, studious, uniform habits; in a course of life entered into upon prospects and provisions held out by the laws, and by all men reputed certain. Perhaps of all persons in the world, they had the least reason to look for imprisonment, exile, and famine. Englishmen will not argue crime from misfortune. They will have an awful feeling of the uncertain nature of all human prosperity. These men had their establishments too; they were protected by laws; they were endowed with revenues. They had houses, they had estates. And it is but the other day that these very persons distributed alms in their own country, for whom, in their extreme necessities, alms are now requested in a foreign land." (The Bishop of St. Pol de Leon is proposed to distribute the subscription, as best acquainted with the wants and claims of the sufferers; and a postscript is added.)—"Since the drawing up of this case, many hundreds of the clergy have been massacred at Paris, with the venerable Archbishop of Arles, a prelate, the greatest ornament of the Gallican Church, in virtue and knowledge, and four other eminent and worthy bishops at their head. Some bishops, and a considerable number of the with which he had to struggle, were incurred. A modern writer (C. Butler, Esq.) gives the following account of one of the almost daily levees of Mr. Burke, to these unfortunate persons, at which he was present:—

"Some time in the month of August, 1791, the Reminiscent called on that great man, and found him, as he usually was at this time, surrounded by many of the French nobility, and haranguing with great eloquence on the horrors of the French revolution, and the general ruin with which it threatened every state in Europe. One of his hearers interrupted him by saying, with somewhat more of levity than suited either the seriousness of the subject, or the earnestness with which Mr. Burke was expressing himself—"Mais enfin, Monsieur, quand est çe que nous retournerons dans la France?" "Jamais"—was Mr. Burke's answer.—It was a word of woe: he pronounced it in a very impressive manner, and it evidently appalled the whole audience.

"After a short silence, during which his mind appeared to be labouring with something too big for utterance—"Messieurs," he exclaimed, "les fausses esperançes ne sont pas une monnoie, que j'ai dans mon tiroir:—dans la France vous ne retournerez jamais." "Quoi donc," cried one of the audience, "çes coquins!" "Coquins!" said Mr. Burke, "ils sont coquins; mais ils sont les coquins les plus terrible que le monde a connu!"—"It is most strange," he then said in the English language —"I fear I am the only person in France or Eng-

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inferior clergy are arrived, and are daily and almost hourly arriving, since that horrible slaughter."

land, who is aware of the extent of the danger with which we are threatened." "But," said the Reminiscent, wishing to prolong the very interesting conversation, "the Duke of Brunswick is to set all right."—"The Duke of Brunswick!" exclaimed Mr. Burke—"the Duke of Brunswick to do any good! A war of posts to subdue France!"—Another silence.—"Ce qui me désespère de plus," he then said—"est que grand je plâne dans l'hemisphére politique je ne vois guères une tête ministerielle à la hauteur des circonstançes."

Among his other visitors from France about this time was the famous Madame de Genlis, who, with her chamberlain and suite took up their abode for a short time at Butler's Court, and of whom the following anecdotes were current in the family. The chamberlain, almost as soon as he had secured a footing in the house, communicated that Madame le Comtesse could not sleep if the least portion of light gained admission into her bed-room. The darkest was therefore appropriated to her, but this would not do; the shutters were fitted afresh to exclude the intrusive morning, but in vain; thick window-curtains were superadded, to no purpose; dense bed-curtains closely drawn to boot, but all ineffectually for the *peste* light was, or was said to be, still visible.—A carpenter was at length added to the establishment of the mansion, whose business it was every evening to nail up blankets against every crevice by which it was possible for a ray of light to enter, and in the morning to remove them—and this remedy, happily for the peace of the house and the slumbers of the lady, proved effectual.

Madame, however, did not prove so great a favourite with some of the friends of her distinguished host as was expected. Her great ambition or failing was to do, or to be thought to do, every thing; to possess a universal genius both in mind and in mechanical powers, beyond the attainments of her own, or even of the other sex. A ring which she wore of very curious, indeed exquisite workmanship, having attracted the notice of Sir Joshua Reynolds while she remained at Butler's Court, he inquired by what good fortune it had come into her possession, and received for answer that it was executed by herself. —Sir Joshua stared, but made no reply. "I have done with her,"—said he the first time he was alone with Mr. Burke afterwards—"to have the assurance to tell *me* such a tale! Why, my dear Sir, it is an antique;—no living artist in Europe can equal it."

One of the most pleasing results derived to Mr. Burke from his literary and parliamentary exertions against the wild politics of the day, was the reasonable train of thought which they tended to excite or to confirm in young men of superior talents and station in life, and in those who were intended for the liberal professions, of whom some might in time be expected to possess authority in the state, and thus through his instrumentality become the future safeguards of the constitution. His disciples indeed soon became numerous, in effect and substance at least if not in name. From several of those who are now the chief ornaments of both Houses of Parliament, he received testimonies of respect and admiration, such as were gratifying to age to receive, and honourable to youth to pay.

Among others of this class was Mr. William Smith,* son of Sir Michael Smith, Bart., Master of the Rolls in Ireland, who, educated at Christ Church, Oxford, learned there to estimate at their due value the merits of his illustrious countryman. To fight therefore under his banners became almost a matter of course. Though very young, he had not suffered himself to be misled by those illusive speculations promulgated under the name of liberty, and so well calculated to impose upon youth; and though a man of genius, he did not deem it necessary to display that fashion of it which waywardly runs counter to the opinions of the aged, the observant, and the wise of his own time. Possessing a spirit too active to remain neuter or idle in the conflict then raging with what were considered republican principles, he enlisted as an author militant against them, and as the forerunner of those eminent talents which have raised him to his present distinguished station in his native country, produced several pieces which attracted considerable notice. One of these, "The Rights of Citizens," he dedicated to Mr. Burke. Its main object was to insist upon what, in the enthusiasm of the moment, seemed to have been almost forgotten, the stability and value of men's social and civil rights, as contradistinguished from those precarious and fantastic ones which Paine had been contending for under the specious title of Rights of Man. The idea was well-timed; for something seemed requisite to sober men down from the heated contemplation of that which it was impracticable to grant or useless and in fact pernicious if attained, to a juster estimate of the substantial good which they already enjoyed. In return for the dedication, the ingenious writer received the following characteristic and admirable letter, forwarded to him at Spa, whither he had then proceeded, which in more than one respect is well worthy the attention of the reader.—

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* Now the Hon. Sir William C. Smith, Bart., Second Baron of the Exchequer in Ireland.

"SIR,

"By some neglect at my house in town, I have been deprived, till this morning, of the satisfaction of reading your book. The use I have made of my morning has convinced me how much I have suffered by that neglect and its consequent delay.

"I have run over too rapidly your book: but in that rapid view, I am able to estimate the value of the honour which has been done me, by inscribing to my name the work of so agreeable a writer, and so deep a thinker, as well as so acute and distinguishing a reasoner. Your work is, indeed, a very satisfactory refutation of that specious folly of the Rights of Man; and I am not a little proud that I have had the good fortune (as you will see sometime or other) to coincide with some of your ideas, in a piece which is just printed, but not yet published.* The points in which we happen to coincide, you have certainly handled much more fully and much better. I have only touched upon them. It was not my plan to go deeply into the abstract subject; because it was rather my desire to defend myself against the extraordinary attacks of some of my late political friends, than formally to set about the refutation of what you very properly call visions;—indeed they may be called delirious, feverish ravings. To refute such things, required a capacity for such deep and large views of society and human affairs, as you have shown.—But the more clearly you refute them, the less you are comprehended by those whose distempered reason you would cure.

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* This was the "Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs," in which, for the purpose of comparing former opinions with those broached by the apologists of the revolution, or at least the results to which they led, he had quoted passages from Paine.

"The discharge of peccant matter must have its course; and will continue as long, I am afraid, as the disease from whence it proceeds has matter to feed it:—I mean the ambition of certain descriptions of men, to distract that society, in which, though they are not without their proper share of attention, they think they do not possess all the importance to which they are entitled.

"You talk of *Paine* with more respect than he deserves. He is utterly incapable of comprehending his subject. He has not even a moderate portion of learning of any kind. He has learned the *instrumental* part of literature; a *style*, and a method of disposing of his ideas; without having ever made a previous preparation of study, or thinking, for the use of it. *Junius*, and other sharply-penned libels of our time, have furnished a stock to the adventurers in composition, which gives what they write an air, (and but an air,) of art and skill;* but as to the rest, Paine possesses nothing more than what a man whose audacity makes him careless of logical consequences, and his total want of honor and morality makes indifferent as to political consequences, can very easily write.

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* This passage has always appeared to Sir William Smith a decisive refutation of the conjecture that the Letters of Junius were written by Mr. Burke. It will have, no doubt, much weight in the list of contra-indicants.

" They indeed, who seriously write upon a principle of levelling, ought to be answered by the magistrate, and not by the speculatist. The people whom they would corrupt, and who are very corruptible, can readily comprehend what flatters their vices, and falls in with their ignorance; but that process of reasoning which would show to the poorest how much his poverty is comparative riches, in his state of subordination, to what it would be in such an equality as is recommended to him, is above his comprehension, even if it were pleasing to his pride; because it involves in it a long and laboured analysis of society. If he will not receive it on authority, he is incapable of receiving it at all; and where a man is incapable of receiving a benefit through his reason, he must be made to receive it through his fears. Here the magistrate must stand in the place of the professor: they who cannot, or will not, be taught, must be coerced.

" With more of your approbation than I can presume to lay any claim to, I meet some of your censure, which I perhaps better deserve. You think that my way of treating these subjects is too much in the concrete; (*here the manuscript is too much blotted to be legible*)—too large a share of circumstances, feelings, &c. &c. However, I console myself in this, because I think, before you have done, you condemn the abstract mode as much as I do; and I am the less ashamed of being in the wrong, when I am in such very good company. But surely you forget that I was throwing out reflections on a political event, and not reading a lecture upon the origin and principles of government. How I should treat such a subject is not for me to say; for I never had that intention. The event itself too was of a very mixed nature.

"On all this, however, I hope I shall have the pleasure of conversing with you more fully at Beaconsfield, on your return, if you should go to the continent as early as you intend; but I hope something may keep you in London 'till I can get to town. I shall be ambitious of improving the acquaintance with which you flatter me.

"I have the honour to be, with great respect and many thanks, Sir, your most obedient humble servant, "EDMUND BURKE.

"To William Smith, Esq." &c. &c.

In December, Mr. Burke keeping his eye steadily fixed on the progress of the Revolution, as the great centre of interest to a statesman, drew up a paper, entitled, "Thoughts on French Affairs," which was submitted to the private consideration of Ministry, and is marked by the same spirit of fore-knowledge as his other writings on the subject. He arrives at three conclusions of which subsequent experience has taught us the truth—that no counter-revolution in France was to be expected from internal causes only; that the longer the system existed it would become stronger both within and without; and that while it did exist, it would be the interest of the rulers there to disturb and distract all other governments.

The communication made to him from the Empress of Russia, through Count de Woronzow and Mr. Fawkener the British Minister, and already alluded to, produced in return a dignified and complimentary letter, dated from Beaconsfield, November the 1st, insinuating forcibly the necessity for her Majesty adopting, by active exertion as well as by declaration, the cause of all Sovereigns, all churches, all nobility, and all society; that the debt due by her predecessors to Europe for civilizing a vast empire, should now be repaid by that empire to rescue Europe from the new barbarism. An air of doubt, however, pervades this letter, as if he had some suspicion of her zeal in the cause; and, if so, the result proved he did not mistake her character, as she did nothing, and probably never meant to do any thing, against the revolutionary faction. Catherine, who possessed many of the qualities of a great Monarch, was nevertheless the most selfish of politicians; to crime and selfishness, in fact, she owed her crown; and feeling that no danger to it existed among her own subjects where the first elements of freedom were unknown, she had not generosity enough to step forward and assist others in distress when there appeared no prospect of immediate profit from the exertion. The purpose of her communication to Mr. Burke was probably to extract from him a letter of admiration and praise, being always ambitious of the notice of the great literary names of Europe; but in returning the courtesy due to a Sovereign and a female, it may be questioned whether he did not inflict some violence on his inclination. Of her private character there could be but one opinion. To the general politics of her court, as evinced toward Turkey and Poland, he was no greater friend, particularly in the business of the partitions of the latter, of which he avowed that honest detestation which every man, not a profligate politician, or a robber by profession, must ever entertain.

The grievances of the Irish Catholics exciting increased discussion and dissatisfaction in that country, he was solicited to state and support their claims to the English Ministry, for relaxation of the penal laws. His son also was appointed their agent, and early in January 1792, proceeded to Ireland to influence their proceedings by such moderate counsels as might give effect to his father's exertions here. He carried with him, from his fond parent, the following letter to Lord Charlemont:

"My dear Lord, "Beaconsfield, Dec. 29, 1791.

"I have seldom been more vexed that when I found that a visit of mere formality had deprived me of the substantial satisfaction which Mrs. Burke and my brother had in seeing you, as well as they had ever remembered you. Many things, at that time, had contributed to make that loss very great to me. Your Lordship is very good in lamenting the difference which politics had made between Mr. Fox and me. Your condolence was truly kind; for my loss has been truly great in the cessation of the partiality of a man of his wonderful abilities and amiable dispositions. Your Lordship is a little angry at politics that can dissolve friendships. If it should please God to lend me a little longer life, they will not, I hope, cause me to lose the few friends I have left; for, I have left all politics I think, for ever.* Every thing that remains of my relation to the public, will be only in my good wishes, which are warm and sincere, that this constitution should be thoroughly understood, for then I am sure it will be sincerely loved; that its benefits may be widely extended, and lastingly continued; and that no man may have an excuse to wish it to have another fortune than I pray it may long flourish in. I am sure that your country, in whose prosperity I include the most valuable interest of this, will have reason to look back on what you have done for it with gratitude, and will have reason to think the continuance of your health for her further service, amongst the greatest advantages she is likely to expect.

Here is my son, who will deliver this to you. He will be indemnified for what I have lost. I think I may speak for this my other and better self, that he loves you almost as much as I do."

Shortly before this, Mr. Burke had commenced writing his celebrated "*Letter to Sir Hercules Langrishe, Bart. M.P.*" as auxiliary to his son's mission in favour of the Catholic claims. It bears date January 3d, 1792, enforces the policy of removing the chief restrictions to which they were subject, particularly that which denied them the elective franchise, and appeals to the recollection of his friend whether his opinions upon the question were not as fully matured and as strongly expressed 32 years before (1760) as at that moment. So successful were his exertions, aided in part by those of other friends, that a bill was speedily introduced into the Irish Parliament by which the profession of the law, hitherto interdicted to Roman Catholics, became open to them; intermarriages with Protestants legalized; restraints upon their education, and the petty obstruction to arts and manufactures shown in limiting the number of apprentices to masters of that persuasion, removed; and next year (1793) they gained the elective franchise.

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* This idea was frequently expressed by Mr. Burke, and for the moment he might possibly intend it; but, in reality, his mind was too active and too intent on such topics, to lie dormant whenever an important question presented itself for exercising his capacious understanding, and great political knowledge.

It has been often the fate of the political leaders of Ireland, not to have their designs approved, or perhaps fully comprehended, by persons of the same class in England, either from some radical difference of opinion or conduct, or from the opposite views which the immediate seat of government, and a dependency of such government, may deem it their interest to entertain. On this occasion they were not more fortunate than on others. Young Burke, though from various causes of prepossession, inclined to take the most favourable view of their leading men at that time, found something in their conduct not to his taste. He had some reasons perhaps for being fastidious. To moderation, good sense, and sterling talents, he united a firmness and rectitude of character which led him to augur ill of a country where what he considered contrary qualities prevailed among some of her chief people, as the following extract of a letter to Mr.

(now Baron) Smith, written soon afterwards, pretty plainly evinces—

"Upon this principle, as far as my little sphere extends, I shall act, because I think the time requires it. The great disorder of this country (Ireland) seems to me to consist in the complication of its politics; and I observe a very dangerous fluctuation and unsteadiness in the opinions and conduct of most of its public men. In these circumstances it seems to me to be every man's duty to give a determination to his own principles and conduct, which if every man does, some order will soon rise out of the present chaos. For one I mean to do so; which induces me the rather to desire your favourable interpretation, if I cannot obtain your active co-operation."

In the spring of the year (23rd February) died Sir Joshua Reynolds, one of the most valued friends of the subject of this memoir, bequeathing him, in return for the trouble of executorship, the sum of 2,000*l.* and also cancelling a bond for the same amount. This proof of regard was a legacy paid to 35 years of close and uninterrupted intimacy, in which most of their friendships, many of their sentiments and feelings were the same. A rumour has pretty generally prevailed that the President was indebted to the pen of Mr. Burke for the substance of his celebrated Lectures on Painting; but of this there is no proof, not even that he corrected them, though this common act of friendship is not improbable. There is, however, little doubt of the artist having profited much by the society, and by those unpremeditated, yet often brilliant effusions of an original and vigorous mind, frequently thrown out by the orator upon art as well as upon general subjects, traces of which have been found in the lectures by some of those staunch literary pointers whom nothing in the shape of coincidence escapes, though after all, they do not detract, in any material degree, from the painter's merit. "What the illustrious Scipio was to Lelius," says Mr. Malone, "the all-knowing and all-accomplished Burke was to Reynolds." A passage in one of Barry's letters informs us of the uses to which an able artist in the higher walk of his profession could put the overflowings of such an intellect, scattered around as they were with a profusion which rendered the recollection of his own offspring scarcely probable: but it is only a superior mind perhaps that can make such use of another superior mind.—Writing from Rome he says—"It is impossible to describe to you what an advantage I had in the acquaintance of Mr. Burke; it was a preparative, and facilitated my relish for the beautiful things of the arts here: and I will affirm, from experience, that one gentleman of a literary turn and delicate feelings for the ideal, poetical, and expressive parts of the art, is likely to be of the greatest service to a young artist." Mr. Burke first suggested to Sir Joshua the well-known picture of Ugolino; while in return he entertained so favourable an opinion of the painter's judgment and discrimination as a philosopher as to submit to him in manuscript the Reflections on the Revolution in France, to which he gave the highest praise. Mr. Burke directed the imposing ceremonial of his friend's funeral; but when at the conclusion of the day he attempted to return thanks in the council-room in the name of the family, to the Members of the Royal Academy for the attention shown to the remains of their late President, his feelings found vent only in tears, for, unable to utter a word, he was obliged to give up the attempt after several fruitless efforts.*

A character of the deceased, drawn up for the newspapers a few hours after his death, was immediately attributed to Mr. Burke, and has been universally admired for that felicity of thought and elegance of diction rarely equalled by our finest writers, on their finest subjects, and which, on a topic where he felt any interest, seems ever to have guided his pen.—" It is," says the learned Seward, " the eulogium of Parrhasius pronounced by Pericles—it is the eulogium of the greatest painter by the most consummate orator of his time." Even a virulent enemy terms it "as fine a portrait as Reynolds ever painted."

" His illness was long, but borne with a mild and cheerful fortitude, without the least mixture of any thing irritable or querulous, agreeably to the placid and even tenor of his whole life. He had, from the beginning of his malady, a distinct view of his dissolution; and he contemplated it with that entire composure, which nothing but the innocence, integrity, and usefulness of his life, and an unaffected submission to the will of Providence, could bestow. In this situation he had every consolation from family tenderness, which his own kindness to his family had indeed well deserved.

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* He became guardian to Miss Palmer, Sir Joshua's niece and heiress, who afterwards was Marchioness of Thomond. When the marriage articles were brought to be signed, Mr. Burke addressed her in an elegant and impressive speech applicable to her intended change of condition, which, however, agitated her so much as to render her utterly incapable of holding the pen. Every effort was made to calm her in order to procure the signature, but in vain; all his soothing powers were exerted endearingly and perseveringly without effect; and the party separated for the time unable to accomplish the purpose of their meeting.

"Sir Joshua Reynolds was, on very many accounts, one of the most memorable men of his time. He was the first Englishman who added the praise of the elegant arts to the other glories of his country. In taste, in grace, in facility, in happy invention, and in the richness and harmony of colouring, he was equal to the great masters of the renowned ages. In portrait he went beyond them; for he communicated to that department of the art in which English artists are the most engaged, a variety, a fancy, and a dignity derived from the higher branches, which even those who professed them in a superior manner did not always preserve when they delineated individual nature. His portraits remind the spectator of the invention of history and of the amenity of landscape. In painting portraits he appears not to be raised upon that platform, but to descend to it from a higher sphere. His paintings illustrate his lessons, and his lessons seem to have been derived from his paintings. He possessed the theory as perfectly as the practice of his art. To be such a painter, he was a profound and penetrating philosopher.

"In full happiness of foreign and domestic fame, admired by the expert in art and by the learned in science, courted by the great, caressed by sovereign powers, and celebrated by distinguished poets, his native humility, modesty, and candour never forsook him, even on surprise or provocation; nor was the least degree of arrogance or assumption visible to the most scrutinizing eye in any part of his conduct or discourse.

"His talents of every kind—powerful from nature, and not meanly cultivated by letters—his social virtues in all the relations and in all the habitudes of life, rendered him the centre of a very great and unparalleled variety of agreeable societies, which will be dissipated by his death. He had too much merit not to provoke some jealousy, too much innocence to provoke any enmity. The loss of no man of his time can be felt with more sincere, general, and unmixed sorrow.

"Hail! and farewell!"

The legacy bequeathed by Sir Joshua was not a solitary instance of the regard entertained for Mr. Burke by his friends. Dr. Brocklesby accidentally hearing he was pressed by some temporary difficulty, delicately observed that as a slight token of remembrance he had put down his name in his will for 1000*l.* but on considering there would be more pleasure in becoming his own executor, he had resolved to anticipate time and to pay the money immediately; and it was paid accordingly.

The question of the Slave Trade being discussed in April, Mr. Burke forwarded to Mr. Dundas a "Sketch of a Negro Code," which he had drawn up in 1780, when, as he observes, the abolition, however much to be desired, seeming altogether chimerical on account of the strong party opposed to it, he aimed at carrying into effect the next best remedies he could devise—that of subjecting the trade to the strictest possible regulations, and by legislative enactments ameliorating the condition of the slaves in, and to be brought into, the islands. On this project, much inquiry, consideration, and labour were expended; it is not a mere draught of a common act of Parliament, but an extensive system, coherent in its parts and bearings, and does honour to the benignant spirit of its author, ever active in the service of suffering humanity.

During this session of Parliament he exerted himself less than on most former occasions, being now, he said, a worn-out veteran in the service, desirous himself to retire, and only coming forward now and then as veterans are accustomed to do, when the garrison of the constitution is exposed to open attack. A measure which he considered of this nature was the notice of a motion by Mr. Grey (30th April, 1792), for Parliamentary Reform, brought forward at the instigation of persons who had taken that measure under their special protection and assuming the title of " Friends of the People." This association, counting among its members many persons of consequence in and out of parliament, and daily increased by the junction of merchants and professional and literary men throughout the country, he stigmatised as of a dangerous tendency. 'The object at which they aimed,' he said, 'was little better; the motives of many concerned in it were doubtless innocent, but the way they went to work was as decidedly wrong; the sense of the people had not been in the least declared on the measure; no specific grievance had been pointed out, no specific remedy assigned, and without these were explicitly set forth, there might be innovation attempted, but it would not be reformation. Suppose a design of this nature to be partially begun, did any member of the society who gave himself the trouble to think at all, imagine it would stop there, or that it would be possible to controul its progress? Our House of Commons, as a body, might not be pure, no more than any individual member of it was wholly pure from sin, frailty, vice or folly of some description or another; yet it was constituted perhaps as well as it could be, as well, in the main, as human nature would permit it to be. At any rate, while he could raise a voice or an arm to prevent it, it should never assimilate to the National Assembly. In that body there were 700 members, 400 of whom were lawyers, 300 of no description that he could name, and out of the whole, he believed there were not a dozen who possessed in any one way a hundred pounds per annum. Such might be the perfection of representation in the eyes of some, nay, he understood it to be the opinion of many of the new sect in politics, but he trusted to the good sense of the people of England never to permit such a mob, nor any thing resembling it, to usurp the sacred office of their legislature.'

The next important question in which he took part was on the motion of Mr. Fox, May 11th, to repeal certain statutes, bearing upon the Unitarian body, from whom that gentleman had presented a petition to that effect three days before. An outline of this clever speech seemingly drawn up *after* its delivery, as it alludes to some points advanced in the debate, appears in his works.* He opposed their claims on the ground of their being the avowed enemies of the church. They had lately accused themselves of a disgraceful timidity with respect to the concealment of their sentiments, and now they were to atone for that timidity by an extraordinary boldness. They had openly declared their hostility to the establishment. They had confessed their determination to propagate their doctrines. They were avowedly a society for the propagation of opinions immediately hostile to our church—they had incorporated for that purpose—they had published pamphlets with that view—they had raised a large fund to be employed in that service—they had entered into a solemn compact to obtain that end—and it was well known that Dr. Priestley was their patriarch. He went on to urge that from their new lights in theology, and their new lights in politics, which latter had been, if possible, more ostentatiously and offensively proclaimed than the former, they did not present any sufficient claim to the favourable consideration of the House. The motion was lost by 142 to 63.

The proclamation issued some time afterwards against seditious writings and doctrines elicited strong symptoms of that difference of opinion among the great body of the Opposition, which it was evident must soon lead to a disjunction of interests; the *old* Whigs, or the Duke of Portland's friends, wholly disagreeing on most topics of the day with the *new*, or the followers of Mr. Fox. A nominal union indeed still existed between them in the House. But the dangers of the country becoming daily more apparent, and the predictions of their more ancient ally and leader, Mr. Burke, being day after day verified, impressed a gradual and general belief in that connexion, of the greater prudence and patriotism of following his opinions.

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* Burke's Works, vol. x.

In the mean time, some whim or ill humour of the Chancellor, Lord Thurlow, inducing him to oppose in the House of Lords certain measures of Mr. Pitt, the latter found it necessary to procure his dismissal from office, intimating, soon afterwards, a desire for a function with the Portland party; and as, in such a season of apprehension, it was desirable to bring all the talents of the country into its service, he did not object to include Mr. Fox among the number. The latter arrangement was particularly pressed upon the Minister by Mr. Burke, who also pressed the policy of acceding to it upon Mr. Fox through indirect channels; and the fact is honourable to his candour, his patriotism, and even his friendship; yet as another specimen of the spirit of party malevolence, he was frequently accused at the moment while thus employed of being that gentleman's personal enemy. Mr. Fox, however, refused to accede to the proposition unless Mr. Pitt resigned the head of the Treasury, when they might better treat upon terms of perfect equality and enter the Cabinet as new men—a piece of humility not justly to be expected from the Minister, or perhaps from any other man holding the same situation. The negociation consequently for the present proved fruitless; but the Prince of Wales seeing the necessity for a decided avowal of his opinions in a season of such peril, came forward with a manly declaration in favour of the conduct of Ministers; and his intercourse with Mr. Fox ceased for several years.

All the threatening symptoms of the spring increased during the summer of 1792, by the unprecedented circulation of incendiary pamphlets; by the communication of the clubs of London with those of Paris, though this happily had the effect of inducing several Members of Opposition to secede from such questionable meetings; and by the formation of affiliated societies through many of the country towns and even villages, openly advocating Republicanism. In Paris, anarchy proceeding in its usual course, became at length open massacre, followed by the dethronement of the King, the institution of a republic, and, encouraged by the repulse of the Duke of Brunswick from the frontier, adding a paternal invitation to all other countries to pursue the example.

In November, Mr. Burke while at Bath drew up another important State Paper, "*Heads for Consideration on the Present State of Affairs,*" distinguished by the same profound sagacity as the others, and sent copies of it to the King, to the Ministers, and to the chief members of the Portland party, as he had done with the "Thoughts" of the preceding year. Its aim is to point out that war, however it may be pushed off for the moment, is inevitable; that nothing can be done conjointly or singly by Austria and Prussia, or any other continental power, with effect against France, excepting they have other aid; "that there never was, nor is, nor ever will be, nor ever can be," any decided impression made upon her of which England is not the directing power, the soul of the confederacy ;—with what truth time has shown.

He urges as part of his reasons for asserting there must be war (in opposition to Mr. Pitt, who shortly before said there would be none), that whatever might be the form of the internal government of France, it had been always our policy to watch over her external proceedings ; and that now, having conquered Savoy, penetrated into the heart of Germany, menaced an invasion of the Netherlands, completely overawed the Helvetic body, and sent a fleet into the Mediterranean to do the same to Italy, we could no longer view these things with indifference. " Spain," he says, " *is not a substantive power ;* she must lean on France or on England ; and it is as much for the interest of Great Britain to prevent the predominancy of a French interest in that kingdom, as if Spain were a province of the crown of Great Britain, or a state actually dependant on it ; full as much so as ever Portugal was expected to be." Pursuing the subject he distinctly points out, what was so truly verified by the event, her ultimate subserviency to France, if great pains were not taken by England to prevent it. In conclusion, he offers many severe comments on the wretched plan and conduct of the invasion of France by the Duke of Brunswick. The whole paper thrown off without finish, or participation in the knowledge of official secrets, displays the reflective discrimination of a great statesman, as correctly as if they were all under his eye.

His labours, in fact, connected with the great convulsion in that country, were almost beyond belief, as well in thinking, in writing, in debating, in corresponding upon it with many of the chief persons in Britain and in Europe, in imparting information, and in unwearied diligence in procuring it. For the latter purpose principally, he had dispatched his son the preceding year, with the knowledge of government, to the French Princes and others assembled at Coblentz, who on his return brought with him to England the famous M. Cazalés, a man of superior talents, distinguished in the National Assembly as the chief opponent of Mirabeau, but who, like most other persons of common sense and common honesty, found it necessary soon after to consult his safety in emigration; and who was further remarkable for bearing so great a resemblance to Mr. Fox as to have been mistaken for him two or three times in the streets of London.* By means of his son, on this trip, Mr. Burke also opened a communication with some of the Ministers of the Emperor of Austria and the King of Prussia, particularly the former, suggesting hints for quieting the disorders of the Netherlands and of Hungary, and alluding to those of France. Some additional communications, written and verbal, said to have been made by him to Lord Grenville on the latter fertile theme, have never been made public; but his suggestions, of whatever nature, were probably not adopted, his views differing materially on many points from those of persons in office.

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* This gentleman subsequently spent much of his time at Butler's Court, and evinced warm admiration for the great talents and virtues of his host. An anecdote told of him on his first arrival in the house, used to be afterwards a source of laughter and amusement to himself. He had often heard of what he called *rost-bif* as a leading and indispensable dish to all Englishmen, but was so perfectly ignorant of what it meant that he took up a slice of toast at breakfast, paused for some time, and then inquired whether this was not the great staple of an English stomach of which he had heard so much?

His further views at this time are stated in the following extract of a letter to his son in Dublin,—"I am now in town trying to take my little part in measures which may quiet the unhappy divisions of the country, and enable us to make head against the common enemy of the human race. To do any good, there ought to be a general cessation, as much as may be, of all public and all private animosities; and first the R——l f——y ought, in my firm opinion, in this question of the very existence of monarchy, as a basis, to be reconciled within itself; the next is, that the Opposition should be reconciled to the Ministry; and that, for that purpose, its dissonant parts should be brought to some agreement if possible—if not, that the well-intentioned should be separated from the contagion and distraction attendant upon an apparent connexion with those who, under the false colour of a common party, are as completely separated in views and in opinions as the most adverse and factious ever have been or can be: the last part of the plan is, that there should be a reconciliation between the Catholics and Protestants of Ireland."—In all these plans he succeeded, but in the last the least; either because government could not or would not pursue the plan he had chalked out, on account probably of the scruples of the King, or perhaps the equally strong obstacles presented by the violent antipathies of the ruling party in Ireland to their Roman Catholic countrymen. Mr. Pitt, there is no possible doubt, felt some jealousy of appearing to be too much guided by his advice, for fully aware of his energy and resources of mind on every subject, he fancied that by adopting his suggestions, he should be only inviting a continuance of them, which might possibly bring him too much under the influence of so active a coadjutor. Yet had his advice been fully followed up by the Minister sanctioning the subsequent arrangements made by Earl Fitzwilliam, there is a general impression among the best informed men of that country that the rebellion would not have taken place.

The first day of the Session, 1792-3, December 13th, brought him forward again, "not," he said, "as the defender of Opposition, or of Ministry, but of the country." Mr. Fox still not merely retained but enforced with a warmth that astonished and confounded many of his most devoted admirers, his former opinions as to the quiet state of the country, the total absence of any spirit in it hostile to the Constitution or Government, and asserted that the alarm arose from the artful designs and practices of Ministers; moving an amendment to the address to this effect. On the report being brought up the following day, he again proposed an amendment to avert the calamities of war with France, by entering into negociation with her rulers. This Mr. Burke replied to with great effect, urging that could war be avoided it were advisable, but he saw a spirit at work that would leave them no option—that he could not recognise a tittle of that peaceful spirit which those persons were stated to possess, who, without the formality of a public declaration, were as hostile to the government, property, and respectability of England as they well could be; who had received at the bar of their Convention as representatives of the English people, a few obscure and worthless men, deputed by obscure, mischievous societies; who had passed many decrees which were in effect declarations of war against every government, and who had declared their determination to retain their new conquests in the Netherlands, which it seemed to be the general sentiment in the House, and in the country, they must give up. Between the nations there was at that moment a moral war, which must soon become an actual war.

Uninfluenced by the results of these proposals, Mr. Fox disregarding the general feeling of the country to the contrary, brought forward on the third day of this struggle (15th December), a motion for sending a Minister to Paris, to treat with the Provisional Government. To this likewise Mr. Burke opposed a negative; and took the opportunity of paying a handsome compliment to the discrimination, good sense, and sound patriotism of the present Earl of Liverpool, who, he remarked, though young, did not permit his understanding to be warped by the infatuation of the day, but nobly stood forward to resist the growing evils. In him, and in the other promising young men, his friends, by whom he was accompanied, he was happy to find that the new doctrines would find powerful opponents.* He complained of being singled out for acrimony and invective whenever the French Revolution was mentioned, as if in the eyes of Opposition he had committed an inexpiable crime by attacking it. He defended Government from principle, not from interest—" For strange as it may appear (said he) to certain gentlemen who now think unfavourably of me; I affirm in the face of the House and of the country, that I retain, and ever will retain, my independence."

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* The late Lord Erskine, who came frequently under his lash, experienced it again on the present occasion. "He was sorry he could not say the same of the learned gentleman, whose speech they had just heard, who always instructed that House as the ancient philosophers did their pupils, by proposing himself as their

The sentiments uttered by Mr. Fox on these occasions, and the pertinacity with which the line of conduct dictated by them was pursued, gave much offence to many of the Opposition, who were either less personally attached to him than others, whose opinions had undergone a change, or who, like Burke, preferred the performance of a great public duty to any private consideration whatever. Among these was Lord Sheffield, who, from partiality to Mr. Fox, or from not perceiving at first to what his opinions tended, it will be remembered was a principal cause of the rupture with Mr. Burke; he now went so far as to say, that he was ashamed of *ever* having entertained any enthusiasm for the right honourable mover of such a measure as that now recommended.

example. Concerning the law, the constitution, or the government of France, the learned gentleman indeed had said nothing: he was right, for France had no law, no government, no constitution, and therefore he was very properly silent; but although the French had none, the learned gentleman had a great deal of law, a great deal of government of himself, and an excellent constitution. But being a general lover of new constitutions and enthusiastically fond of projectors, he was not surprised at his having undertaken to plead the cause of Citizen Paine."

Others, if less strong, were not less explicit or loud in their terms of disapprobation.

While the opinions of Mr. Burke continued thus to gain ground even in the camp of his opponents, an incident which occurred at this time turned their attention for a moment from his matter to his manner. A bill was introduced for the regulation of Aliens, in favour of which he made a long and able speech (28th December), on the principle that the ministers of a monarchy could not and ought not to have their hands tied behind them, while the emissaries of republicanism, regicide, and atheism, poured into their country with the design to destroy it, and yet be, by the weakness of the law, secure from controul; and further, that war being probably at hand, he could not reconcile it to himself to give to the servants of the crown now a layer of support, and now a layer of opposition, but systematically to aid a measure which only formed part of a system of measures conscientiously meant to benefit the country by warning off it, and out of it, murderers and atheists; enemies to church and state; to religion and God; to morality and happiness.

In commenting upon a decree of the Convention, by which the system of fraternizing was indirectly to be propagated by the sword, he mentioned the circumstance of three thousand daggers having been bespoke at Birmingham, of which seventy had been delivered, and as a tangible illustration of his statement and argument, drew forth a concealed one which he flung indignantly upon the floor of the House. "*This*," said he, pointing to the weapon, "is what you are to gain by an alliance with France:

wherever their principles are introduced, their practice must follow: you must equally proscribe their tenets and their persons from our shores." His speech upon the occasion produced considerable effect upon the House. Whether this unusual peroration, so completely "suiting the action to the word," was in such good taste, may admit of some doubt, though certainly well calculated, as he meant it should, to draw universal notice, and possibly to impress the most inconsiderate with a sense of the danger accruing from intercourse with the emissaries of the desperate faction which ruled France. On the other hand, his political opponents termed it a vile oratorical flourish, a theatrical pantomimic trick, unworthy of a great orator, who could by other and more legitimate means command the attention and sympathies of the House; but the vehemence of the censure it provoked, only proved, as his friends remarked, the effect it was believed likely to produce in the country.

The course of nature (as well as the unhappy politics of the time), was now exacting from him the hardest tax perhaps which age has to pay, that of seeing our friends gradually dropping into the grave around us, without our possessing that activity or elasticity of spirit necessary to form and cement new connexions. Shortly before this period, he had lost his early friend Mr. Shackleton, whose occasional visits and letters kept alive that ardour of affection with which the associates of our youth are regarded in every subsequent period of life, and never perhaps so tenderly as when from increasing infirmity their tenure of life becomes daily more precarious.

To the letter of Mrs. Leadbeater announcing the event, he wrote the following reply, dated September 8th, 1792:—

My dear Madam,

“After some tears on the truly melancholy event of which your letter gives me the first account, I sit down to thank you for your very kind attention to me in a season of so much and so just sorrow to yourself. Certainly my loss is not so great as yours, who constantly enjoyed the advantage and satisfaction of the society of such a companion, such a friend, such an instructor, and such an example: yet I am penetrated with a very sincere affliction; for my loss is great too. I am declining or rather declined in life, and the loss of friends, at no time very reparable, is impossible to be repaired at all in this advanced period. His annual visit had been for some years a source of satisfaction that I cannot easily express. He had kept up the fervour of youthful affections; and his vivacity and cheerfulness, which made his early days so pleasant, continued the same to the last: the strictness of his virtue and piety had nothing in it of morose or austere; and surely no life was better, and (it is a comfort for us to add) more happily spent than his. I knew him from the boyish days in which we began to love each other.

“His talents were great, strong, and various: there was no art or science to which they were not sufficient in the contemplative life; nor any employment that they would not more than adequately fill in the active. Though his talents were not without that ambition which generally accompanies great natural endowments, it was kept under by great wisdom and temperance of mind; and though it was his opinion that the exercise of virtue was more easy, its nature more pure, and its means more certain in the walk he chose, yet in *that* the activity and energy which formed the character of his mind were very visible. Apparently in a private path of life, his spirit was public. You know how tender a father he was to children worthy of him by their genius and their virtue; * * * yet he extended himself more widely; and devoted a great part of his time to that society, of no mean extent, of which the order of the Divine Providence had made him a member. With a heart far from excluding others, he was entirely devoted to the benefit of that society, and had a zeal very uncommon for every thing which regarded its welfare and reputation; and when he retired, which he did wisely and in time, from the worthy occupation which he filled in a superior manner, his time and thoughts were given to that object. He sanctified his family benevolence, his benevolence to his society, and to his friends, and to mankind, with reference in all things to that Supreme Being, without which the best dispositions and the best teaching will make virtue, if it can be at all attained, uncertain, poor, hard, dry, cold, and comfortless.

"Indeed we have had a loss. I console myself under it by going over the virtues of my old friend, of which I believe I am one of the earliest witnesses, and the most warm admirers and lovers. Believe me this whole family who have adopted my interest in my excellent departed friend, are deeply touched with our common loss, and sympathize with you most sincerely. My son is just arrived in Dublin. My wife is not very well, and is preparing for a journey to Bath, which I trust will re-establish her. My brother, who will hear this news with a sorrow equal to mine, is now at Cheltenham for the benefit of the waters.—Compose yourself, my dear Madam, you have your work to do. * * * Pray remember me to the gentleman I have not the honour of knowing, but whose happiness you make. Thank for me my worthy friend Abraham for his good-natured letter, and beg him to consider it as answered in this. I hope you will assure my dear friend Mrs. Shackleton, the worthy wife of my late invaluable friend, that we sympathize cordially in all she feels; and join our entreaties to yours that she will preserve to you as much as possible of the friend and parent you have lost."

The war which he had so long predicted as inevitable was now at hand, precipitated perhaps by the opening of the Scheldt, by the promise of assistance from the National Convention to all people who should wish to throw off the tyranny of Kings, and particularly by the execution of Louis XVI. Mr. Burke, however, was not pleased with the assignment of the former motive, deeming it weak in comparison with some others.—" A war for the Scheldt!" exclaimed he in his forcible phraseology as soon as it was mentioned; " A war for a cham—r p—t!"—War at this moment however was no longer matter of choice with the ministry, being formally declared against England by the Republic on the 1st of February. The propriety and the necessity of it on our part, were already acknowledged by the old Whigs, who thus became separated by a distinct line of political feeling and conduct from Mr. Fox, leaving him not only much reduced in numbers in Parliament, but greatly impaired in moral strength of character, and in political credit in the general opinion; for his remaining friends, though unquestionably men of talents, possessed not, in more than one sense, the confidence of the country.

It must always be matter of surprise to numbers, and of regret to many, how that eminent man could so perseveringly resist and condemn a measure which was in itself unavoidable, and which was supported by the general, and as it proved in the result the just, judgment of the country, or how he could have acted otherwise than Mr. Pitt did act, had he himself been Minister. It may be possible, however, that had Mr. Pitt led the Opposition, the spirit so inherent in political rivalry would have induced him to do just as Mr. Fox did; or in other words, that with the difference of men, the results to the country would have been precisely similar. In saying this no reflection is for a moment insinuated against the strict integrity of principle of either; but we are all, even the wisest and the best intentioned of men, the creatures of circumstances. It is therefore utterly impossible for the most conscientious statesman that ever lived, to view with the same degree of favour or through the same medium, measures originated by himself, or by those to whom he is politically opposed; or to estimate public affairs and measures by the same standard, whether he be in, or whether out of power. Had Mr. Fox been in office at this time, his views, his feelings, his prejudices, his judgment, would have certainly differed, with the difference of his public relations to the government; his anxieties would have been greater, and his apprehensions more easily excited; his penetration more sharp and sensitive by the very weight of his charge; he could scarcely have seen or heard, it may be said, with the same eyes and ears, as when at the head of the Opposition; and all this without any sacrifice of principle. The workings of the mind, arising from heavy responsibility, nearer views, better information, and more direct contact with the machinery of the state, and of the real rather than the ostensible grounds of its proceedings, are so imperceptible very often in their operation, that a statesman is often wound gradually round from the opinions he may have formerly entertained to others of a different description, almost without being aware of the change, and is sometimes surprised, and sometimes indignant, when told he is inconsistent with himself. This allowance ought to be made for all public men, though it is one which is generally denied them.

Mr. Pitt, it is perfectly certain, no more than Mr. Fox, had no great appetite for war. His glories had been hitherto peculiarly of the peaceful cast, his popularity was acquired in a state of prosperity and tranquillity. War might destroy, but was not likely to add to them. His interest therefore was to avoid hostilities; and so well did he know this and desire by all the means in his power to accomplish it, that he could not be brought to believe what Mr. Burke had repeatedly told him almost constantly for two years before, that war must ultimately ensue. Far from precipitating that event therefore he pushed it off until the very last moment, when, in fact, there was no alternative left him.

How Mr. Fox, placed in the same situation, could have avoided the storm, it is impossible to conjecture. He was above all state quackery, and never professed to have discovered any infallible nostrum by which to subject raging political madmen, whether at home or abroad, to the dominion of quiet and reason. He was, indeed, in many respects an easy man, a friendly man, an illustrious man, with great capacity of head, and much of the milk of human kindness in his heart, but the foreign race of revolutionists showed no particular attention to individual character except in cutting off the heads of those who enjoyed it, and there is no reason to believe that their disciples here would have been more merciful; a sentence which would have been pronounced the moment he interfered with any part of their system of confusion, having first, in order the more effectually to accomplish it, made him their dupe.

Admitting, however, that his vigilance on this point was greater than he avowed, it is not improbable that, as Minister at this moment, he might have parleyed a little longer with the Republic; he might have withheld some of our reasonable demands; he might have, for the forlorn hope of peace, overlooked slighter affronts; he might still have tolerated the revolution, and constitutional, and corresponding societies, and their innumerable affiliations; he might have submitted some time longer to daily importations of the emissaries and principles of anarchy; but as the demands on his patience rose, so even his concessions must have had an end. With all his partialities to popular licence, he must have discovered to what these abuses of it tended. He could not have trifled with the quick discernment of the late King, whose decision in moments of alarm has never, perhaps, been rated at its due value. He could not have resisted the deliberate conviction of his co-adjutors in office, and especially of the great Whig families, the supporters and partners of his fame for so many years; and least of all, could he have withstood, as Minister, the intuitive sagacity, the prophetic warnings so constantly fulfilled, the clear views, and conclusive reasonings of Mr. Burke; though as leader of Opposition his pride shrunk from acquiescing in any thing which implied tacit deference to the measures of Mr. Pitt. That war would therefore have ensued had even he been at the helm, it is impossible to doubt; that he would have conducted it differently may be probable; that it would have been better conducted is at best but matter of opinion. But there is some ground to fear that it might have been delayed until the enemy had gained more ground and more proselytes; until the situation of the allied powers had become more precarious; until the throne and the constitution were beginning to totter under outrageous assaults; and consequently until our means of defence had been weakened.

When Mr. Pitt brought down the King's message regarding the declaration of war by France, and Mr.

Fox on the following day (12th of February) moved an amendment to the address, weakening its force, Mr. Burke gave it, judging by the outline which remains of the speech, a triumphant reply. Touching on the singular care of Mr. Fox's friends, that not an idea, or a merit of any kind belonging to him should be lost to the public, a peculiarity which strikes every reader of political history during his career, he turned this fact to account, on an observation made by Mr. Fox.

"The right honourable gentleman had complained bitterly of the misrepresentation of his expressions in that House. To him it appeared very extraordinary how a person of talents so clear, so powerful, and so perspicuous could possibly be misunderstood—how a person who took so much pains by repetition, and going over the same grounds again and again to bring his superior powers to the low level of the vulgar eye, could possibly be subject to misrepresentation—how a gentleman whose friends out of doors neglected no human art to display his talents to their utmost advantage, and to detail his speeches to the public in such a manner, that he, though a close observer of the right honourable gentleman, had never been able to recollect a single idea of his that had escaped the industrious attention of his friends, while those of a right honourable friend of his (Mr. Windham), whose abilities were equalled by his virtues, were so mangled and so confused in the reports that were made of them, as to be utterly unintelligible to the public." * * * *

"The right honourable gentleman had said that he hoped he was not reputed an advocate for France.

To this he would say, that if the cause of France was an honest cause, it was justice to this country, and to mankind, to undertake her defence. The true skill of an advocate was, to put forward the strong part of his client's case, and gloss over and hide the weak; to exhibit all its right in the brightest point of view, and palliate the wrong; when he could no longer palliate, to contrive that the punishment should be as slight as possible, or to bring his writ of error, and by every quirk evade it as well as he could; and no man possessed that power in a greater degree than the right honourable gentleman. To his speeches he always attended with admiration and respect. That which he had just heard he could not help estimating less highly, seeing that he had read every part of it in Brissot's speeches in the National Convention, one part only excepted, and that was the part in which the right honourable gentleman had asserted "that France had used every means to conciliate the regards and good will of Great Britain."

Adverting to the war, and his own opinion on that head for some time past, he said—war was no common matter, no pastime for occupying the attention of a party, to be inconsiderately taken up or put down at pleasure. In a case of such importance to this country and to mankind as the present was, gentlemen should examine whether they had any sinister motive, as if they were in the divine presence, and act upon the pure result of such examination. He declared he had no hesitation to pronounce, as if before that presence, that Ministers had not precipitated the nation into war, but were brought into it by over-ruling necessity. "I possess as deep a sense of the severe inflictions of war as any man can possibly do.

> "Trembling I touch it, but with honest zeal."

I always held it as one of the last of evils, and wish only to adopt it now from the conviction that at no distant period we shall be obliged to encounter it at a much greater disadvantage. For four years past it has grieved me to the soul, it has almost reduced me to death, when I observed how things were going on, and felt my utmost exertions unable to produce upon the government of the country, or in the public mind, a conviction of the danger that approached them. At length the infatuation was removed—Ministers awoke to the peril that awaited them ere it was too late." * * * "*He readily allowed that this was the most dangerous war we were ever engaged in*; that we had to contend with a set of men now enured to warfare, and led on by enthusiasm and the ardour of conquest to such a degree that they bartered the arts, commerce, industry, manufactures, and civilization itself, for the sword." The latter passage is chiefly remarkable for exhibiting the wholly different view of the nature of the war which he entertained from the Minister, who now as for years afterwards, maintained that it was a war of little danger to ourselves, that it would not continue long, and the event be not at all doubtful.

Six days afterwards (February 18th) Mr. Fox brought forward five resolutions condemnatory of the war, and of the principles on which it was undertaken, which Mr. Burke again opposed with all his powers. At the conclusion of his speech, he presented the current doctrines of the day in a new aspect.—"Gentlemen," he said, "who were so charmed with the lights of this new philosophy, might say that age had rendered his eyes too dim to perceive the glorious blaze. But old though he was, he saw well enough to distinguish that it was not the light of heaven, but the light of rotten wood and stinking fish—the gloomy sparkling of collected filth, corruption, and putrefaction.

"So have I seen in larder dark,
  Of veal a sparkling loin,
Replete with many a brilliant spark,
As sage philosophers remark,
  At once both stink and shine."

In the debate on Mr. Sheridan's motion, brought forward March 4, relative to the existence of seditious practices said to prevail in the country, an altercation productive of some warm words arose between Mr. Fox and Mr. Burke, on a contradiction given by the former to some statements made by the latter, of which he said he had proofs in his possession, respecting the Princess Lamballe and M. Egalité (Duke of Orleans). To another insinuation made by Mr. Fox, that he himself was deserted by his party from their weariness of travelling so long in the barren track of opposition, Burke replied that "the new track through which he had called upon them to follow him was no common waste, but the barrenest of the barren—the desarts of Arabia. But if a caravan travelling through those desarts should find that their leader, from passion or obstinacy, had wandered from the right road, and that by following him they were in danger of being attacked by some plundering Sheik, they might be allowed to think a little of their own safety, and take measures for securing it.

"He could say for himself that he had deserted no party; and that of those with whom he had been accustomed to act, there was not one that differed from him in opinion on the present state of affairs, or disapproved of a single vote he had given in the course of the present session. *Those who had incidentally joined that party by the way, had no claim upon him.* As the right honourable gentleman had learned from Dr. Price the doctrine of cashiering Kings, he presumed he would admit that leaders of parties, when they did wrong, might likewise be cashiered. If the leader should seem to consider the party as made only for him, instead of considering himself as but a part of it; if he should adopt a line of conduct without consent or consultation; if he should make speeches and motions as if he meant to say 'you dislike what I did to-day—I will do more to-morrow; if you disapprove of what I do to-morrow, worse awaits you the day after that,' it might then be supposed that the party was at liberty to leave him."

The Traitorous Correspondence bill (March 22d) produced two speeches from him in its support, in the first of which he denounced several of the clubs of France who had assailed his name with threats and obloquy. He also noticed part of a speech from a member of the National Convention, Citizen Lasource, who laments that—"The moment is not yet arrived in which may be seen at the bar of the revolutionary tribunal, that Orestes of the British Parliament, the madman Burke, that insolent Lord Grenville, or that plotter Pitt. But the moment is arrived in which the public have summoned them to the bar of their opinion. The moment is arrived in which they are consigned to the detestation of all nations whose execrations and anathemas they so richly deserve—scourges of the earth, and vultures preying upon the vitals of the people, they have failed not to scatter their crimes and their gold to distract a nation which they despaired of being able to conquer * * * * *. Soon shall they be laid prostrate before the altar of liberty, from which they shall rise only to mount the scaffold that awaits them, and to expiate by their deaths the evils in which they have involved the human race."

The second speech (9th April) was exceedingly able and argumentative, by far the best delivered upon the occasion. Touching on the supposed injury to commerce, he said, " England was a commercial nation—so was every other, as far as it could. But if by commercial nation it was implied that commerce was her ultimate, her only end, he would deny it; her commerce was a subservient instrument to her greater interests, her security, her honour, and her religion. If the commercial spirit tended to break those, he insisted that it should be lowered." * * * * " Let us not turn our every thing, the love of our country, our honour, our virtue, our religion, our security, to traffic—and estimate them by the scale of pecuniary or commercial reckoning. The nation that goes to that calculation destroys itself." * * * *

Supposing the case of an English contractor, dead to every principle but avarice, bargaining with the French, he fancied him recommending his goods in the following way. "Should our Sovereign, impelled by parental feelings for his people, hazard his august person, and take the field against you, behold here is powder of the first quality, and here are bullets that will do his business. I do not cheat you; believe me they are good. Or should his children, stimulated by an hereditary thirst for glory, take the field, their avarice shall defeat their courage; those bullets and this bayonet shall go to their hearts, and Great Britain and her commerce be the gainer."

On the 17th of June he came forward vigorously to oppose Mr. Fox's motion for an address to His Majesty, for the re-establishment of peace with France. "Let us," said he, "consider of the possibility of negociation. Supposing that England was to send an ambassador to the Sans-Culottes convention to make the *amende honorable,* in a white sheet at the bar of the meeting, and by way of approximating to their system of equality, confer that agreeable and honourable office on some nobleman of high rank, how were we sure that instead of a respectful reception he would not be saluted *à la mode de Santerre,* holding the bloody head of Louis XVI. as an example to all sovereigns?

"Would you next have him to apply to the Minister, Le Brun? Unfortunately the poor fellow is in gaol, and it may be very uncertain whether they would consent to grant him a day rule. Would you apply to the minister, Clavierre? You then would have *non est inventus* returned upon the back of the writ, for it seems he is not to be found. Would you have recourse to Roland? Why, he is not only in gaol, but also his wife along with him, who is said to be the real minister. The wife too may be inaccessible; for as Roland is known to be uxorious, he is the more likely to be jealous, and would not, perhaps, readily admit the visit of your ambassador. Apply to Brissot, who has so many friends in this country, and let your ambassador take care he leaves his watch behind him. But alas! here again Brissot is likewise in gaol, bearing a repetition of that sort of misfortune to which it is hoped that habit has reconciled him. Pay your addresses to Egalité, and you will find him in his dungeon at Marseilles, sighing at the reflection of those hopes he once entertained of being lieutenant-general of the crown of France. There then only remains my celebrated friend, the mild and merciful Marat, whom a negociator might address with very excellent effect, if he carried credentials or recommendations from me. Such are the list of sovereigns who are to receive the submission and *amende honorable* of the British nation."

Since the open disunion of Mr. Burke and Mr. Fox, some cessation of public intercourse, though none whatever of esteem or private friendship, had occurred between the former and the Duke of Portland, from an idea entertained by his grace that the latter would in time be brought round to form sounder opinions upon the great question in dispute, and, in the mean time, lest an impression of marked favour or partiality should interfere to prevent it, he desired to keep somewhat aloof from both gentlemen. The motive for this Mr. Burke perfectly understood, and did not disapprove, being as anxious as his grace to make a convert of his former friend. But daily occurrences rendering this event more and more improbable, less ceremony became necessary in their intercourse, and during the summer, the Burkes, father and son, accompanied the Duke to Oxford, on his formal installation as Chancellor of the University, the former having likewise attended a private ceremony of the same nature at Bulstrode, his grace's seat, the preceding October. He was received by the heads of this seat of learning with all the marked respect and attention which his celebrity claimed at their hands, but it is said privately refused to be proposed for the honorary degree of LL.D, which, on a former occasion there had been some hesitation to grant. His son however, as well as Mr. Windham and others, received this mark of attention. He himself resided chiefly with Mr. Winstanley, Principal of Alban Hall, and Camden Professor of Ancient History, who was much impressed by the various knowledge and brilliancy of conversation of his guest, and of whose qualifications as a philologer he thus wrote soon afterward:—

"It would be indeed as useless as it would be presumptuous in me to attempt to add to the reputation of Mr. Burke. Among the studies to which I have immediately applied, there is one which from his attention to the more important concerns of active life, it might be supposed that he had overlooked:—I mean that of ancient and modern languages. Those however who were acquainted with the universality of his information, will not be surprised to hear that it would have been exceedingly difficult to have met with a person who knew more of the philosophy, the history and filiation of languages, or of the principles of etymological deduction, than Mr. Burke."—His society indeed proved a treat to all who possessed themselves, or who knew how to value in others, intellectual superiority: Gibbon, who had just arrived from Switzerland after some years' absence, sought him out immediately, and writes at this time twice in his letters, "I spent a delightful day with Burke."

To his son, who had spent the earlier part of the year in Ireland, on the business of his mission in favour of the Roman Catholics, he began to address a letter on that important question, which, however, was never finished. A passage in it will be read at the present moment with some interest, and may give rise to some serious reflections, among those who take part in that great question.

"I am sorry to find that pride and passion, and that sort of zeal for religion which never shows any wonderful heat but when it afflicts and mortifies our neighbour, will not let the ruling description perceive, that the privileges for which your clients contend, is very nearly as much for the benefit of those who refuse it, as those who ask it. I am not to examine into the charges that are daily made on the administration of Ireland. I am not qualified to say how much in them is cold truth, and how much rhetorical exaggeration. Allowing some foundation to the complaint, it is to no purpose that these people allege that their government is a job in its administration. I am sure it is a job in its constitution;

nor is it possible a scheme of polity, which, in total exclusion of the body of the community, confines (with little or no regard to their rank or condition in life) to a certain set of favoured citizens the rights which formerly belonged to the whole, should not by the operation of the same selfish and narrow principles, teach the persons who administer in that government, to prefer their own particular, but well understood private interest, to the false and ill-calculated private interest of the monopolizing company they belong to.

"Eminent characters, to be sure, over-rule places and circumstances. I have nothing to say to that virtue which shoots up in full force by the native vigour of the seminal principle, in spite of the adverse soil and climate that it grows in. *But speaking of things in their ordinary course, in a country of monopoly there can be no patriotism. There may be a party spirit—but public spirit there can be none. As to a spirit of liberty still less can it exist, or any thing like it.* A liberty made up of penalties! a liberty made up of incapacities! a liberty made up of exclusions and proscriptions, continued for ages, of four-fifths perhaps of the inhabitants of all ranks and fortunes! In what does such liberty differ from the description of the most shocking kind of servitude?"

A letter of young Burke at this time to his friend Mr. Smith, already introduced to the reader, reiterates his opinion of the leaders of Irish politics, and alludes to some of their mutual writings.

"MY DEAR SIR, "Dublin, Tuesday.

"I should have more pleasure than I have in sending you the enclosed, if it were better worth your acceptance than it is. It has all the faults which some of its censurers have, in print, found with it; but if it had as many more, I am not sure that it would, *on this account*, be substantially the worse. I do not know whether I am capable of producing a work of literary merit, but I know I was not, in this instance, attempting any thing of the kind. I merely wished to ring a bell that should be heard; and felt no particular anxiety as to the sweetness of its tone. *Your* criticisms I shall indeed listen to with interest and attention; because I know you attend more to the matter than to the manner of a thing.

"It appears that when you wrote, a letter of mine had not yet reached you. When it was sent to your house in Hume Street, the messenger was told that you had left Dublin, but that it should be sent after you without delay. It is therefore likely that you have received it by this time; and if so, you have discovered your mistake in supposing that I had not found time (I should have *made time*) to read over what you sent me. I have read the whole of it with pleasure, and will you think me too complimentary if I add—parts of it with admiration. The Vision and the Fable rival each other with me; and if it were not for the reception given to *Rekub* in the former, I do not well know which I should prefer. The controlling effect which you suppose his ascendant to produce on his opponent, is very happily imagined, and executed with great skill. I may—

indeed I must be partial, where my father is concerned. But I will, notwithstanding, venture to say that I do not think him undeserving of the praise which you have bestowed, with so much cordiality and good taste.—Numbers 7 and 15 are also very good. In parts of the former there is a felicity of expression which I have seldom seen surpassed.

"But yet, if you have received my letter, you know that I would dissuade you from giving your thoughts to the public in this form. The path which you are treading has been already trodden, since the days of the Tatler and Spectator, not only by first but by second rate writers; and one who neither knew the author, nor happened to fall upon a fascinating passage, might take up and open your book, only to shut and lay it down again.

"You must introduce me to your father. Not to his acquaintance; for I have done this myself; perhaps forwardly enough; but under circumstances which, when you hear them, you will say amount to an apology, or something near it. Accordingly I am forgiven; for I am to be his guest on Saturday; but I fear without much chance of meeting you.—What I want you to introduce me to, is his favourable opinion. I flatter myself that to do this, will be but to communicate your own. We have not indeed met often, or known each other long; but on the day when I sat next you at Beaconsfield, it seemed to me that we made as much progress in intimacy as could well be made in an afternoon; especially by two lemonade drinkers, which I remember we were at the time.

"The more I detect of the spirit of your Irish councils, the less I like them. —— and —— may be what you call them. But I fear you are doing what you do not mean to do, complimenting them. I suspect their bigotry to be no better than a mask; ugly enough in all conscience; but hiding what is less honest, and therefore more deformed. Then the vessel of your state! It seems to be without a rudder, or without a steersman; tossed at the will of wind and current, or of a management which is shifting, contradictory, and capricious; and what port it is to find, or whether it is to find any, I take to be rather a matter of chance than of calculation.

"On some of these points, if you do not altogether differ from me, neither, I fear, are we quite agreed. I am some years older than you; and I think time will remove whatever differences of opinion at present exist between us on these subjects. In the mean while let me say you are too candid. Not content with throwing weighty reasons into your own scale, you are also for flinging arguments into that of your adversaries, which, without your assistance, many of them would not have discovered; but which you will find them ready enough to turn to an unfair and ungrateful purpose.

"In my last letter you will have found me almost soliciting your active co-operation. This I do not expect; nor perhaps, under all the circumstances, ought I ever to have expected. Yet there is nothing in the *substance* of my letter which I repent of. What I should do, if I were now revising it, would be to make it less formal than I believe it to have been. From the kindness of your's which is now before me, it appears that you have not forgotten an evening to which I have been alluding, and I am led to hope that you will pronounce mine (his letter) to have been too ceremonious, and will consider our Beaconsfield afternoon to have put me on a footing of more familiarity with you than I have used. I shall feel greatly obliged by your reproaches upon this score.

"Most faithfully your's,

"To William Smith, Esq. "RICHARD BURKE."

CHAPTER IV.

Letter to the Duke of Portland on the Conduct of the Minority.—Letter to Mr. Smith.—Character of Mr. Dundas.—Remarks on the Policy of the Allies.—Letters to General O'Hara, Mr. Murphy, and Mr. Dolphin.—Richard Burke the Elder.—Report upon the causes of the duration of Mr. Hastings's Trial.—Death of Young Burke.—Dr. Laurence's Letters.

THE tendency of the politics of Mr. Fox becoming more generally questioned in the country, and to many a source of suspicion, if not of apprehension, he thought it necessary to explain and defend his conduct more at large, by a letter addressed to his constituents, the electors of Westminster. This piece Mr. Burke characterized generally as eloquent, but displaying more forbearance than his friend Fox thought it necessary to display towards his "Reflections," he refrained from invidious criticism. Dr. Parr, however, though so staunch a friend of the "Man of the People," expressed himself slightingly of the taste and literary merits displayed in its execution, observing in conversation, "there were in it passages at which Addison would have *smiled* and Johnson *growled*.

A resolution of the Whig Club about this time, moved by Lord William Russell,—that their confidence in Mr. Fox was confirmed, strengthened, and increased by the calumnies against him—did not appear to operate much in setting him right in public opinion. But being evidently levelled at the exceptions taken to his parliamentary conduct by Mr.

Burke, Mr. Windham, Sir Gilbert Elliot, and others, they immediately withdrew their names from the Club to the number of forty-five noblemen and gentlemen, writing their reasons for seceding; and it being insinuated that the Duke of Portland had concurred in the obnoxious resolution, Mr. Burke in justification of his own, and his friends' censures, drew up for the consideration of his grace, as the head of the party, the famous "*Observations on the Conduct of the Minority.*"

This paper details, under fifty-four heads, a strong case against Mr. Fox, which that gentleman's friends, with their usual zeal, characterized as an unjustifiable proceeding; but it is difficult to conceive for what reason, except it be deemed unfair and injudicious to detach those we respect and desire to serve, from attachments and from proceedings which we ourselves hold to be wrong, and which are held to be so by the great body of the nation. Thinking upon public affairs as Mr. Burke was known to do, it is not to be supposed that he would act otherwise than he did. The paper was transmitted to the Duke as a confidential communication sealed up, with an intimation that he did not even desire it to be read by him until a disconnexion of interests with Mr. Fox should take place, which the sagacious writer pronounced to be ultimately inevitable. It cannot therefore be justly characterized as being meant to *produce* a rupture between that nobleman and his leader in the House of Commons, but rather as a matter for consideration *consequent* upon such an event occurring from other causes. His own words in the letter to the Duke which accompanied the paper are—

"I now make it my humble request to your Grace, that you will not give any sort of answer to the paper I send, or to this letter, except barely to let me know that you have received them. I even wish that at present you may not read the paper which I transmit; lock it up in the drawer of your library table, and when a day of compulsory reflection comes, then be pleased to turn to it. Then remember that your Grace had a true friend, who had, comparatively with men of your description, a very small interest in opposing the modern system of morality and policy; but who under every discouragement was faithful to public duty and to private friendship. I shall then probably be dead. I am sure I do not wish to live to see such things; but, whilst I do live, I shall pursue the same course."

Communicated thus in confidence, it might have remained for ever, or for along time at least, unknown to the world, but for the scandalous breach of confidence committed by the amanuensis of Mr. Burke, an ungrateful and unprincipled man named Swift whom he had rescued from abject poverty, who having kept a copy of what he was employed to transcribe, surreptitiously printed it in 1797, under the invidious title of "Fifty-four Articles of Impeachment against the Right Hon. C. J. Fox." Mr. Burke being then at Bath confined to his bed, his friends in town obtained an injunction from the Chancellor to stop the circulation, but too late to prevent the distribution of many copies through the country. He wrote directly to Dr. Lawrence, desiring him to disclaim the act and the intention of publication, but not one of the sentiments which the paper contained.

The aim of it was unquestionably to beat down the belief that either the late conduct or opinions of Mr. Fox were constitutional, and to show that his proceedings on many recent occasions evinced an ambitious, a meddling, almost a treasonable,* any thing indeed but a patriotic spirit. The heated exaggerations of his friends perhaps required to be cooled down to this freezing level. The care with which they reported his speeches and detailed his sentiments, so that not a single idea worthy of notice, or a merit of any kind belonging to him should be lost to the public, was pointedly mentioned in the late session by the subject of this memoir, and the fact will recur to the memory of most readers of political history. Mr. Burke, however, should not have mentioned what in great measure originated with himself, except indeed he imagined he possessed an exclusive privilege to pull down the idol he had chiefly contributed to raise. He it was who first gave Mr. Fox to the world as a great man. He wrote him and spoke him into public esteem. He enlisted him into his party. He pushed him forward to lead to a certain degree the Rockingham connexion even over his own head, regardless of personal interests, or of that still greater object, personal importance, which was sure to accrue to himself from keeping such an ally at a distance. He knew that Mr. Fox, as much by his connexions as by his talents and rising popularity, would be most useful to his party, and that from his friendships with, and sway over, the most promising young men coming forward in Parliament, he was likely to possess a weight there which he himself, from many causes already specified, could not hope to acquire. There was the further motive of the regard of a master for a favourite pupil, for he tells us that Fox was brought to him when only a boy of fourteen; the triumph of one therefore was in some degree a merit of both.

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* This alludes to sending his friend Mr. Adair with his *cypher* to St. Petersburg, to counteract the objects at which the Embassador of the Crown aimed—an unprecedented occurrence in the history of the Opposition.

All this partiality, therefore, was not without an object; but it was a party, not a private object; and therefore exhibited his personal disinterestedness. The fact shows us likewise the total absence on his part of any feeling akin to jealousy. It must not however be understood that he ever submitted to become a secondary person in this junction of interests, which was strictly in the nature of an alliance rather than a subjection of one to the other, for both continued to be principals; Burke being perhaps on the majority of occasions the real actuating spirit, and Fox the nominal leader of the party. It is at least certain that whatever the one had determined to do, the other found it expedient to approve. There will not be a question therefore among those who are best acquainted with the political history of their mutual career, that Mr. Fox would never have arrived at that pre-eminence in his party, or in the country, which he possessed, had it not been for the active aid and counsel of Burke.*

The following letter, written about this time to his young friend in Ireland, Mr. Smith, alludes playfully to several of the lighter productions of that gentleman, whose pen was diligently employed on literary as well as political matters.

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* Of his fondness to applaud, or as somebody has termed it, to *puff* his pupil as much on private as on public occasions, the fol-

"My dear Sir,

"I have taken possession of one of your packets, and will forward the other as you desire. *Peter Parallel** is a very pleasant fellow; and tells serious truths with considerable humour. I need not tell you how much my son admires *The Vision*,* for I know that he has told you this himself. But though I too thought highly of it from the first, you either must have improved it, or I appear to have done it scanty justice. But the fable of *The Rights of Waters** continues to be my favourite; and

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lowing extract of a letter to his cousin Nagle, written in October, 1777, during the visit of Mr. Fox to Ireland, is an instance:—

"I am heartily glad and obliged to you for your letter, and for your kind remembrance of me when you happened to see so many of my most particular friends in so remote and sequestered a spot as the Lake of Killarney. Ned Nagle told me that they were at your lodge, but your letter only expresses that you dined with them. Whenever you saw them I am sure that you passed a pleasant day; and I may venture to say, with no less certainty, that the satisfactions of the Lake of Killarney were heightened by meeting you there, and by your obliging attention to them.* * * * Don't you like Charles Fox? If you were not pleased on that short acquaintance you would on a further; for he is one of the pleasantest men in the world, as well as the greatest genius that perhaps this country has ever produced. If he is not extraordinary, I assure you the British dominions cannot furnish any thing beyond him. I long to talk with him about you and your Lough."

* These passages have reference to political essays, of which Mr. Smith was the author. The "Rights of Waters," here

this you certainly have retouched, and to good effect. Your manuscripts too are in high request.* Miss ——— declares that if she was a Naiad, she would be afraid of you; though I have made her confess that there is nothing satyrical in your gallantries. C——— says your French is exquisite; and as he is a Frenchman, and no flatterer, he may probably be trusted. I am no competent judge of this matter; but I certainly think your English is exquisitely tender. I write in haste, but hope I have said enough to prove that if the Muse should present you with any further pledges of attachment, they might be sent to nurse here with every prospect of a good reception. You must not, however, become a poet, or a gallant, even of the Naiads. Nature meant you, or I am mistaken, for something more respectable and useful. Yet I must confess that the compliments and regards with which I am charged, are intended for the poet. But I, who am an old politician, naturally direct my adieux to the embryo statesman, &c. &c. "EDM. BURKE."

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spoken of so favourably by Mr. Burke, formed an ingenious parallel with the course of human life, in which, from the order of things established by the Great Creator of the universe, it is ordained that some must swim on the surface, some at the bottom of the great stream of society, more especially civilized society; but that the dispositions are not so fixed as not to exhibit continual fluctuations and changes of position. It was a blow at the principles inculcated by "The Rights of Man," and similar productions.

* These manuscripts were juvenile poems—one addressed to the Naiad of Brynkinelt in North Wales, in commemoration of the excellence of the water of a spring in the demesne of Lord Dungannon; another inscribed to the Naiad of Tears, being an imitation of Gray's lines, "*O lacrymarum fons,*" &c. These lines Mr. Smith had likewise paraphrased in French.

As a mark of respect for his unwearied labours, and the interest which he took in the public cause, events of importance on the continent connected with the war, were communicated to him as to a cabinet minister, by a special messenger. When the news of the surrender of Valenciennes arrived, a communication of this nature found him at the little theatre of Chalfont-St.-Peter, a few miles from Beaconsfield, when he interrupted the performance for the purpose of reading aloud the contents of the dispatch to the audience, pointing out, as he proceeded, the importance of the conquest; and giving money to the humble orchestra to drink his Majesty's health, ordered them to play *God save the King*, which was accompanied by the audience in chorus.

The information forwarded on this occasion, and other civilities of a similar nature shown him by the Ministry, usually came through the channel of Mr. Dundas, with whom, of all the members of the cabinet at this time, he was most intimate, and for whom he had the greatest regard, arising as much from real respect for his talents, as for knowing him to possess qualities which form the surest pledges for the excellence of the heart.

This gentleman exhibited another instance of an eminent British Statesman, detached not merely from the law as a study, but from the active practice of it almost in the highest rank of the profession in his native country, to aim at a still higher prize in the lottery of political life in England. He was a younger son of the Lord President of the Court of Session in Scotland, and applying himself diligently to forensic pursuits, attained the important post of Lord Advocate at the age of thirty-four. Nearly about the same time he commenced his career in Parliament, as member for the county of Edinburgh, and the American war breaking out immediately afterwards, he thought it his duty to support the views and measures of ministry in that unfortunate contest. Under Lord Shelburne's Administration, however, he accepted the office of Treasurer of the Navy, and, on this account, was charged, as all statesmen are at some period or other of their lives, with inconsistency in quitting his former opinions on that topic, as well as with political ingratitude in deserting the falling fortunes of his original patron, Lord North. It was in this situation that he formed that intimate acquaintance, both personal and political, with Mr. Pitt, which continued with uninterrupted regard for the remainder of their lives, and which tended so materially to his own political success. With him he was thrown out by the coalition ministry in 1783; with him he again returned to power and resumed his office, in addition to becoming President of the Board of Controul under the new system of government for India; with him he debated side by side the great and trying questions agitated during the revolutionary war; and with him he quitted office in 1801, when unable to acquire for the Roman Catholics of Ireland those concessions which had been indirectly promised.

Soon after his return to power, in company with his great friend as first Lord of the Admiralty, having been, in the mean time raised to the peerage by the title of Viscount Melville, a dense cloud burst upon his head, and seemed for a moment to overshadow his fame. This was the tenth report of the commissioners of naval inquiry, who, in their examination into the business of the various offices in that department, charged him, if not with peculation, at least with mismanagement of the public money intrusted to his care, in his former office of Treasurer of the Navy. This shade however passed away, and has left nothing of stain behind it. Of any thing like guilt he was fully acquitted by the House of Lords, on the impeachment to which the charge gave rise; and the utmost censure to which he is amenable, is, perhaps, some degree of irregularity and negligence, arising rather from the misconduct of others than of his own, and against which it is difficult for any minister in a leading department of the state to guard, whose unavoidable confidence in his deputies in office, is ungenerously abused.

As a Minister he was sagacious, acute, practical in his views, unwearied in the duties of his office, fond indeed of performing them, and not difficult of access. The country is indebted to him in no inconsiderable degree, for a variety of measures and suggestions, many of which, however, remain yet to be appropriated to the rightful owner. The India department seemed to be for some years almost his own. His knowledge of it was necessarily much more extensive and minute than that of any other man in or out of Parliament, except Burke, while in acquaintance with the details of the local governments there, he possessed from his official situation several advantages. Between them there might be said to be a monopoly of this branch of information.

With Burke also he participated in the error, if any error can ever be proved to have been committed, of being the original accuser of Mr. Hastings. Some useful and important alterations connected with the administration of the government of India owe their origin to him. Among these was that extension of power to the Governor General of that country, which, while it left less room for those bickerings and contentions between Governor and Council, which had formerly prevailed to so great a degree, exacted from the former in return for such confidence, a proportionate personal responsibility. At the commencement of the war with France, the volunteer system received an impulse from his judicious measures, which tended materially to rouse the spirit of the country. He planned and conducted, in opposition it is said to several dissentient voices in the Cabinet, the expedition to Egypt which expelled the French from that country. On his accession to the Admiralty, the same active spirit of improvement accompanied him thither, and many judicious measures were devised for the comforts of the seamen, and the improvement of the situation of more than one class of the subordinate officers, until, to the unfeigned regret of all the other classes of that service over which he presided, the unexpected charge alluded to, interrupted his career.

During nearly the whole of his political life, his influence in his native country was extensive, perhaps of late years unexampled; and it implies no ordinary merit on his part to find the quiet, the external prosperity, and the domestic improvement of the country to have kept pace with his tenure of power. No murmurings during this long period were heard; no dissatisfaction expressed against him for the exercise of this power, at undue partiality on the one hand, or unmerited disfavour on the other. In England it was his lot to be almost equally fortunate; and it must ever be considered a proof of singular exemption from great faults, or of a moderation of conduct which deprived popular prejudice of its favourite food, that in a period of the most envenomed political warfare, nothing more serious could be urged against him than a few harmless jests of Peter Pindar.

In Parliament, he never pretended to, and never sought, the character of a finished and imposing orator; for his manner was ungraceful, and his dialect provincial: content with grasping directly and forcibly the substance of his argument, he appeared little solicitous about the elegance of the manner in which it should be handled. But there was a boldness and decision in his mode of address that always commanded attention, and a solidity and acuteness in the matter it conveyed which seldom failed to perform their office of convincing. No ministry could have possessed a more useful member. He was not so much cut out for brilliant and overpowering efforts on special occasions, as for the necessary and laborious duties, the expositions and defences of measures, which he had daily to undertake in carrying on the actual business of the state. He was rarely to be taken unawares, but ready as it seemed, every day, and every hour of the day, for debate.

Constantly opposed as he and Mr. Burke were to each other in the great theatre of national eloquence, neither the conflicting opinion, the biting sarcasm, nor the vehement reprehension with which a minister is often gratuitously saluted by a leader of Opposition, produced between them any thing like feelings of hostility. They first became more personally familiar in the session 1780-81, in consequence of serving on East India Committees; and saw in each other kindred qualities which subsequently served to soften something of the acerbity of party. From about the year 1790 until the death of Burke, occasional communication on public matters took place between them. There was in Mr. Dundas a goodness of heart that claimed esteem; he was continually called upon by persons of whom he knew little to do kind offices, and he did them in the kindest, often in the most generous manner; he was frank, sociable, careless of money, and affectionate in his attachments,—qualities which acquired him nearly as many friends as he possessed acquaintance. Other and more imposing characteristics may belong to the statesman, but these call upon us to love, to distinguish, and unaffectedly to respect the memory of the man.

Mr. Burke, though a warm supporter of the war, as the only means of saving the country, differed frequently with Ministry on its details, more particularly the mode of carrying it on, which was scarcely ever to his satisfaction; and looking only to the results, his objections would seem to have been well grounded. One of the chief papers on the subject was "Remarks on the Policy of the Allies with respect to France," begun in October 1793, a passage of which displays such an instinctive knowledge of France and of Frenchmen, that the cause of the ill-success of the Bourbons in conciliating the public mind of that country in 1814, will become immediately obvious, while it exhibits another instance of the sagacity which could teach that family, twenty-one years before the event, the only mode of *securing* their kingdom in case they should again acquire it.

"Whoever claims a right by birth to govern there, must find in his breast, or conjure up in it an energy not to be expected, not always to be wished for, in well ordered states. The lawful prince must have in every thing but crime the character of an usurper. He is gone if he imagines himself the quiet possessor of a throne. He is to contend for it as much after an apparent conquest as before. His task is to win it; he must leave posterity to enjoy and to adorn it. No velvet cushions for him. He is to be always (I speak nearly to the letter) on horseback. This opinion is the result of much patient thinking on the subject, which I conceive no event is likely to alter." The terms and spirit of the declaration or manifesto issued by the British Government, under date of October 29th (1793), he highly approved of, but thought its promulgation ill-timed and imprudent at a moment when, from the successes of the enemy, and the reverses of our own arms, hostile manifestoes appear more petulant than formidable.

In another passage he specifically points out, in express terms, as if futurity was open to his view, that no settlement of France could be hoped to be immediate, and that a military government, or something tantamount to it, must precede the formation of a regular government.

"What difficulties will be met with in a country exhausted by the taking of its capital (in money) and among a people in a manner new-principled, trained, and actually disciplined to anarchy, rebellion, disorder, and impiety, may be conceived by those who know what jacobin France is, and who may have occupied themselves by revolving in their thoughts what they were to do if it fell to their lot to re-establish the affairs of France. What support or what limitations the restored Monarchy must have, may be a doubt, or how it will pitch or settle at last; *but one thing I conceive to be far beyond a doubt; that the settlement cannot be immediate; but that it must be preceded by some sort of power, equal at least in vigour, vigilance, promptitude and decision to a military government.* For such a *preparatory* government no slow-paced, methodical, formal, lawyer-like system, still less that of a showy, superficial, trifling, intriguing court, guided by cabals of ladies, or of men like ladies; least of all a philosophic, theoretic, disputatious school of sophistry—none of these ever will, or ever can lay the foundations of an order that will last."

Toulon being now in our possession, he wrote the following letter in favour of a deserving officer, to the commandant of that place, Lieutenant-General O'Hara, who was an old acquaintance:—

"MY DEAR SIR,

"Some very pleasant things have happened to me lately, because they connect the public advantage with my private regards and affections. Toulon is our's (I trust it still is), and my friend General O'Hara commands. I heartily congratulate the nation, myself, and you, upon this happy combination of circumstances; and I promise myself every thing from it. Will you be so good as to keep an old humble servant of your's in your thoughts; and be so good as to excuse also this mode of reminding you of one that has always respected, and always will very sincerely respect you.

"The person who will have the honor of delivering this to you is Captain Edwards, an officer of thirty-two years unimpeached and meritorious service. He is a person whom I recommend with an earnestness very different from that which generally dictates ordinary letters of recommendation. I am extremely interested in every thing which can contribute to his honor and advantage; and if I can obtain for him your favour and protection, few things could happen more agreeable to me. I have known him for many years; and I have esteemed him as I have known him. He is a man of worth and integrity, if any man is so; and one in whose society it is impossible not to find great satisfaction from his good principles, good temper, and good nature. His object now is to be on the staff.

"Once more give me leave to assure you of my most sincere regards; and do me the justice to believe me always, "My dear Sir,

"Your most obedient,

"And faithful humble servant,

"EDMUND BURKE.

"Beaconsfield, October 27, 1793."

The dedication of his translation of Tacitus, by Mr. Murphy, drew two letters from Mr. Burke of mingled acknowledgments and criticism; the one written from Duke-street, May 26, 1793, the other from Beaconsfield, in December of the same year. In the former he says,—

"I thank you for the partial light in which you regard my weak endeavours for the conservation of that ancient order of things in which we were born, and in which we have lived neither unhappily nor disgracefully, and (you at least) not unprofitably to your country. As to me, in truth I can claim nothing more than good intention in the part I have to act. Since I am publicly placed (however little suitably so to my abilities or inclination), I have struggled to the best of my power against two great *Public Evils*, growing out of the most sacred of all things, Liberty and Authority. In the writings which you are so indulgent as to bear, I have struggled against the Tyranny of Freedom; in this my longest and last struggle (the impeachment, to which he had alluded in the foregoing part of the letter) I contend against the Licentiousness of Power.—When I retire from this, successful or defeated, your work will either add to my satisfaction or furnish me with comfort. *Securiorem et uberiorem, materiam senectuti seposui.*"

The second letter is interesting for the literary criticism which it contains.

"I have read the first book (the translation of Tacitus) through, besides dipping here and there into other parts. I am extremely delighted with it. You have done what hitherto I think has not been done in England; you have given us a translation of a Latin prose writer, which may be read with pleasure. It would be no compliment at all to prefer your translation to the last, which appeared with such a pomp of patronage. Gordon was an author fashionable in his time, but he never wrote any thing worthy of much notice but that work, by which he has obtained a kind of eminence in bad writing, so that one cannot pass it by with mere neglect. It is clear to me that he did not understand the language from which he ventured to translate; and that he had formed a very whimsical idea of excellence with regard to ours. His work is wholly remote from the genius of the tongue in its purity, or in any of its jargons. It is not English nor Irish, nor even his native Scotch. It is not fish nor flesh, nor good red-herring: yours is written with facility and spirit, and you do not often depart from the genuine native idiom of the language. Without attempting, therefore, to modernize terms of art, or to disguise ancient customs under new habits, you have contrived things in such a manner that your readers will find themselves at home. The other translations do not familiarise you with ancient Rome, they carry you into a new world. By their uncouth modes of expression they prevent you from taking an interest in any of its concerns. In spite of you they turn your mind from the subject, to attend, with disgust, to their unskilful manner of treating it; from such authors we can learn nothing.

"I have always thought the world much obliged to good translators like you. Such are some of the French. They who understand the original, are not those who are under the smallest obligations to you: it is a great satisfaction to see the sense of one good author in the language of another. He is thus *alias et idem*. Seeing your author in a new point of view, you become better acquainted with him; his thoughts make a new and deeper impression on the mind. I have always recommended it to young men in their studies, that when they had made themselves thorough masters of a work in the original, then (but not till then) to read it in a translation, if in any modern language a readable translation was to be found. What I say of your translation is really no more than very cold justice to my sentiments of your great undertaking. I never expected to see so good a translation. I do not pretend that it is wholly free from faults, but at the same time I think it more easy to discover them than to correct them. There is a style which daily gains ground amongst us, which I should be sorry to see further advanced by the authority of a writer of your just reputation. The tendency of the mode to which I allude, is to establish two very different idioms amongst us, and to introduce a marked distinction between the English that is written, and the English that is spoken. This practice, if grown a little more general, would confirm this distemper, such I must think it, in our language, and perhaps render it incurable.

"From this feigned manner of *falsetto,* as I think the musicians call something of the same sort in singing, no one modern historian, Robertson only excepted, is perfectly free. It is assumed, I know, to give dignity and variety to the style; but whatever success the attempt may sometimes have, it is always obtained at the expense of purity and of the graces that are natural and appropriate to our language. It is true that when the exigence calls for auxiliaries of all sorts, and common language becomes unequal to the demands of extraordinary thoughts, something ought to be conceded to the necessities which make "ambition virtue;" but the allowances to necessities ought not to grow into a practice. Those portents and prodigies ought not to grow too common. If you have here and there (much more rarely however than others of great and not unmerited fame) fallen into an error, which is not that of the dull or careless, you have an author who is himself guilty in his own tongue of the same fault in a very high degree. No author thinks more deeply, or paints more strongly, but he seldom or never expresses himself naturally. It is plain that comparing him with Plautus and Terence, or the beautiful fragments of Publius Syrus, he did not write the language of good conversation. Cicero is much nearer to it. Tacitus, and the writers of his time, have fallen into that vice by aiming at a poetical style. It is true that eloquence in both modes of rhetoric is fundamentally the same; but the manner of handling is totally different, even where words and phrases may be transferred from the one of these departments of writing to the other."

His niece, Miss French, being about to bestow her hand upon Captain Haviland, Mr. Burke communicated the circumstance to the gentleman already mentioned, Mr. Dolphin, whose attention to her family was remembered with gratitude, and who still possessed the management of its pecuniary concerns—

"TO OLIVER DOLPHIN, ESQ., LOUGHREA, IRELAND.

"MY DEAR SIR,

"The parental care which you and Mrs. Dolphin have had the goodness to show to my niece, Mary French, calls at all times for my gratitude, and at this time for the communication which I think ought to be made to you of whatever is of importance with regard to her. She is at this time on the point of engaging in an important matter to all human creatures. A young gentleman in my neighbourhood, and whom I have known from his infancy, has been for a good while much attached to her, and she has shown a liking to him: I believe him to be a most worthy and honourable man, and likely to rise in the military profession; it is Captain Haviland (in the next promotion to be Major), son of the late General Haviland. He has something at present beside his commission, not wholly inconsiderable, and on his mother's death will have a reasonably good estate; so that on his side Mrs. Burke and I could have no just objection to their union.

"In giving him this young woman, I think I make him a very valuable present. I do not know a better creature; her temper is admirable, infinite good nature, a great deal of piety, much affection to her relations, and I am sure a mind full of love and gratitude to you and Mrs. Dolphin, of whom she never speaks without being sensibly affected. I think these dispositions in her promise as much happiness as is to be expected in any marriage.

"I now beg that as you have hitherto been so very kind as to interest yourself in her poor affairs, you will be pleased to send over a statement of them so as to enable us to direct a proper settlement; and that in future you would continue the protection which has hitherto been matter of so much advantage and consolation to her. I have seen your son Mr. Dolphin, though from unpleasant occupations, not so much or so often as I wished. I am not singular in a very high opinion of the talents and virtues of this young gentleman, and the amazing progress which at his time of life he has made in whatever distinguishes a man in letters and leads to professional distinction. I hope to be more fortunate when he returns amongst us. Mrs. Burke and Mary desire their most affectionate regards to you and Mrs. Dolphin; and do me the favour to believe me, my dear Sir,

"Your most faithful
"And obedient humble servant,
"EDMUND BURKE.

"Beaconsfield, Nov. 28, 1793."

Early in February 1794, the affections of Mr. Burke received a severe shock in the death of his brother Richard, with whom, and indeed with all his relatives, he had ever lived in a degree of harmony and affection rarely witnessed in the most united families. There was but little difference in their ages. They had started nearly at the same time, and under circumstances nearly similar, though with very different capacities, to work up the hill of life together; and whenever the weaker powers of the younger caused him to lag behind, the hand of the elder was immediately extended to aid him on the journey. For many years they had but one purse and one house, and many of their friendships and pursuits were in common. The talents of Richard, though bearing no comparison with those of his brother, were much above mediocrity, and would have placed him high in any sphere of life, had not a constitutional vivacity and love of pleasure rendered him less patient of application than his brother: he wrote extremely well, but wanted industry. Lord Mansfield, who had formed a high opinion of his powers, pronounced him a rising man at the bar; but an inclination to politics, and the acceptance of the situation of one of the secretaries to the Treasury, in 1782, and again in 1783, injured his prospects as a lawyer, though, through the interest of his brother, he became afterwards Recorder of Bristol, and one of the counsel on the trial of Mr. Hastings. His person was good; his features handsome; his manners prepossessing; which, with his wit and humour, gave him a ready introduction to the fashionable society of the metropolis.

Goldsmith, with whom he was in habits of intimacy, characterizes him almost as happily as he has done his brother Edmund—

> "While Dick with his pepper shall heighten the savour."

And again—

> "Here lies honest Richard, whose fate I must sigh at;
> Alas, that such frolic should now be so quiet!
> What spirits were his! what wit and what whim!
> Now breaking a jest and now breaking a limb!
> Now wrangling and grumbling to keep up the ball!
> Now teasing and vexing, yet laughing at all!
> In short, so provoking a devil was Dick,
> That we wished him full ten times a-day at Old Nick;
> But missing his mirth and agreeable vein,
> As often we wished to have Dick back again."

One particular species of the waggery here attributed to him occasionally afforded amusement to the domestic circle of his brother. He claimed the office it seems of reading the newspaper aloud every morning at the breakfast table, making such comments on the circumstances of the day as his whim and humour suggested; and when these proved barren of matter for his genius, he would turn to his brother's speech of the preceding night, read a part of it correctly, then suddenly introduce something of his own of quite an opposite purport to the report, and continue apparently to read with a grave face until interrupted by Edmund, with the exclamation—"This is all wrong, Dick; they quite mistake me." A silent assent was nodded by the wag, who nevertheless continued his teasing career of invention.—"These people," again would Mr. Burke exclaim, "are quite malicious or foolish to make me say such things." The wit, still unmoved by the simple perplexity of his brother at the stupidity of the reporters, would go on with something still more outrageous until finally stopped by the earnest and solemn assurance, " I declare to God, Dick, I said nothing of this kind."

When in the West Indies, Richard, it appears, made a purchase which turned out unfortunate, and ultimately occasioned him considerable pecuniary loss. To this circumstance Edmund alludes in a letter to Mr. Nagle, of July, 1772—

" Since my brother came home he has not been negligent in the management of his contested purchase. How the matter may finally terminate I know not; but hitherto he has gone on so successfully as to obtain a report of the Board of Trade, recommending to the Council the disallowance of the act of Provincial Assembly, which had put him out of possession and declared his title void. Thus far he has succeeded. Of the quiet and unmolested possession I do not despair; but as it is an affair of magnitude, so it will be a work of time and patience." Again in August, 1776, he says—" Richard the elder is in town. If his business had prospered, you would have been one of the first to hear of it. But we do not trouble our friends except with pleasing news. He has had much wrong done to him; but the thing is not yet desperate. I believe that the Commissioner who goes out will not have adverse instructions."*

Mr. Burke took little share in parliamentary business until the session was pretty far advanced, and then chiefly by speaking in favour of voluntary subscriptions and enrolment of troops as not being unconstitutional, and as an evidence to the enemy of the patriotic spirit of the country; of permitting foreigners, more especially French Royalists, to enlist in the British army; and of detaining persons suspected of designs against the government. He opposed, as he had before done, when himself a professed economical reformer, a violent amputation of the emoluments of pensions, sinecures, and particularly of the efficient offices of administration, in a bill proposed at this time by Mr. Harrison; observing that the amount would be contemptible in itself, and the principle absolutely dangerous—"As it went to a direct invasion of the rights and properties of individuals; for the emoluments of places held under the Crown were possessions as sacred as that of any landed property in the country, and a motion might as well be made for taking a certain part of the property of a man who possessed an estate of ten or twenty thousand a year."*

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* New Monthly Magazine, December 1825.

A motion by General Fitzpatrick to address his Majesty to interfere with the King of Prussia for the release of La Fayette, then confined in one of his prisons, drew from Burke the severest animadversions upon that conceited pretender to patriotism, who by his mischievous yet contemptible conduct proved the origin and author of most of the calamities of France. Instead of being termed, he said, an "illustrious exile," he was then, and ought to be always considered, the outcast of the world, who having neither talents to guide nor in the least to influence the storm he had so diligently laboured to raise, fled like a dastard from the bloodshed and massacre in which he had involved so many thousands of unoffending persons and families.

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* Similar sentiments had been on a former occasion declared by Mr. Fox.

In the debate on the Volunteer Bill, some squibbing took place between him and Mr. Sheridan; the former observing that long speeches without good materials were sometimes dangerous to venture upon, even for a popular man, quoting some doggrel to that effect, printed in the American war:

"Solid men of Boston, banish strong potations,
Solid men of Boston, make no long orations.
Bow, wow, wow."

When the wit, conceiving the first line, if not the second, might be aimed at him, keenly retorted by saying that he remembered some other lines from the same approved author:

"Now it hapt to the country he went for a blessing,
And from his state daddy to get a new lesson;
He went to daddy Jenky, by trimmer Hal attended.
In such company, good lack! how his morals must be mended.
Bow, wow, wow."

On the 5th of March, he moved for a committee to inspect the Lords' journals, relative to the proceedings on the trial of Mr. Hastings, and to report the facts and their observations thereon to the House. This report, occupying nearly 200 octavo pages, was accordingly made on the 17th of April, and is reputed by those who are presumed to be competent judges of the subject, which embraces very important questions in law, one of the ablest and most elaborate papers that have come from the pen of Mr. Burke. It observes in detail, under the various heads of Jurisdiction of the Lords—Law of

Parliament—Rule of Pleading—Publicity of Judges' opinions — Debates on Evidence—Circumstantial Evidence—Practice of the Courts below—and others, as well as upon all minor occurrences connected with the impeachment; and the greatest source of surprise to the reader will be the recondite and various knowledge of legal forms, principles, and history which it exhibits, and which must hereafter make it a source of interest to the legal profession, upon which it comments with so much force and freedom, but without the least hostility.

"This report," says a living lawyer of eminence,* "was penned by Mr. Burke, and may be ranked among the most valuable productions of his pen. It turns on a question of the highest importance, both in legislation and jurisprudence—whether in cases for which neither the written nor unwritten law of a nation has provided courts of law may make a provision for it, by conforming existing laws and principles to it, or by subtracting it from their operation. The question occurs on a nice point in the doctrine of testimony; and to this the description in the report principally applies; but it embraces the whole of the subject, and abounds in learning and profound observation; unfortunately its title is far from alluring, and it has therefore been little read."

"A short account," adds a modern historian, "of the spirit of this document, and of the principal matters which it contains, is of high importance. It is a criticism not only upon this trial, but upon the law, a thing in this country of great rarity, from a source of high authority. It would also be a thing of great utility, if it would show the people of the country what they have been carefully disciplined not to believe, that no greater service can be rendered to the community than to expose the abuses of the law; without which the hope of its amendment is for ever excluded * * * *. Acutely sensible, however, to the spur of the occasion, he (Mr. Burke) felt the abuses which crossed him in his path. These he has displayed with his usual felicity of language; and these it is of importance with respect to the imitative herd of mankind to have stamped with the seal of his reprobation."*

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* Charles Butler, Esq.

The report being published without authority in the form of a pamphlet, Lord Thurlow, the constant friend of Mr. Hastings in his legal difficulties, laid hold of the opportunity, which the forms of parliament of not noticing in one house what is said in the other would otherwise have prevented, to vent his indignation in the House of Lords upon a publication, the matter of which he termed "disgraceful and indecent," "which tended to vilify and misrepresent the conduct of judges and magistrates entrusted with the administration of justice, and the laws of the country."

On the following day (May 23d), Mr. Burke, in his place, adverted to this attack in a brief and pointed reply, which, imperfect as is the report of it, is too masterly upon such a great constitutional matter to be omitted:

> "The license of the present times makes it very difficult to talk upon certain subjects in which parliamentary order is involved.

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* Mill's British India, vol. v. pp. 231—2.

It is difficult to speak of them with regularity, or to be silent with dignity or wisdom. All our proceedings have been constantly published, according to the discretion and ability of individuals, with impunity, almost ever since I came into Parliament. By prescription people had obtained something like a right to this abuse. I do not justify it. The abuse is now grown so inveterate, that to punish it without a previous notice would have an appearance of hardship, if not injustice. These publications are frequently erroneous as well as irregular, but not always so: what they give as reports and resolutions of this House have sometimes been fairly given.

"It has not been uncommon to attack the proceedings of the House itself, under colour of attacking these irregular publications; and the House, notwithstanding this colourable plea, has, in some instances, proceeded to punish the persons who have thus insulted it. When a complaint is made of a piratical edition of a work, the author admits that it is his work that is thus piratically published; and whoever attacks the work itself in these unauthorised publications does not attack it less than if he had attacked it in an edition authorised by the writer.

"I understand, that in a place which I greatly respect, and by a person for whom I have likewise great respect, a pamphlet, published by a Mr. Debrett, has been very heavily censured. That pamphlet, I hear (for I have not read it), purports to be a report made by one of your committees to this House. It has been censured (as I am told) by the person and in the place I have mentioned in very harsh and very unqualified terms. It has been said, and so far very truly, that at all times, and particularly at this time, it is necessary for the preservation of order and the execution of the law, that the characters and reputation of the Judges of the Courts in Westminster Hall should be kept in the highest degree of respect and reverence; and that in this pamplet, described by the name of a Libel, the characters and conduct of those Judges upon a late occasion had been aspersed, as arising from ignorance or corruption.

"I think it impossible, combining all the circumstances, not to suppose that this speech does reflect upon a report which, by an order of the committee on which I served, I had the honour of presenting to this House. For any thing improper in that report, I am responsible, as well as the other members of the committee, to this House, and to this House only. The matters contained in it, and the observations upon them, are submitted to the wisdom of the House, that it may act upon both in the time and manner that to your judgment may seem most expedient, or that you may not act upon them at all, if you should think it most useful to the public good. Your committee has obeyed your orders; it has done its duty in making that report. I am of opinion with the eminent person by whom that report is censured, that it is necessary, at this time very particularly to preserve the authority of the Judges. This, however, *does not depend upon us, but upon themselves.* It is necessary to preserve the dignity and respect of all the constitutional authorities. This, too, depends upon ourselves. It is necessary to preserve the respect due to the House of Lords: it is full as necessary to preserve the respect due to the House of Commons: upon which, whatever may be thought of us by some persons, *the weight and force of all other authorities within this kingdom essentially depend.* If the power of the House of Commons is degraded or enervated, no other can stand. We must be true to ourselves; we ought to animadvert upon any of our members who abuse the trust we place in them: we must support those who, without regard to consequences, perform their duty.

"For your committee of managers, and for myself, I must say, that the report was deliberately made, and does not, as I conceive, contain any very material errors, or any undue or indecent reflection upon any person. It does not accuse the Judges of ignorance or corruption. Whatever it says, it does not say calumniously. This kind of language belongs to persons whose eloquence entitles them to a free use of epithets. The report states, that the Judges had given their opinions *secretly*, contrary to the almost uninterrupted tenor of Parliamentary usage on such occasions. It states that the opinions were given, not upon the *law*, but upon the *case*. It states, that the mode of giving the opinions *was unprecedented, and contrary to the privileges of the House of Commons.* It states, that the committee did not know *upon what rules and principles the judges had decided upon those cases*, as they neither heard them, nor are they entered upon the journals. It is very true, that we were and are extremely dissatisfied with those opinions, and the consequent determination of the Lords, and we do not think such a mode of proceeding at all justified by the most numerous and the best precedents. None of these sentiments are the committee, as I conceive, (and I full as little as any of them) disposed to retract or to soften in the smallest degree.

"The report speaks for itself. *Whenever an occasion shall be regularly given to maintain every thing of substance in that paper, I shall be ready to meet the proudest name for ability, learning, or rank, that this kingdom contains, upon that subject.* Do I say this from any confidence in myself? Far from it! It is from my confidence in our cause, and in the ability, the learning, and the constitutional principles, which this House contains within itself, and which I hope it will ever contain; and in the assistance which it will not fail to afford to those who, with good intention, do their best to maintain the essential privileges of the House, the ancient law of Parliament, and the public justice of the kingdom.

No one, as may be supposed, seemed inclined to take up the gauntlet thrown down in the concluding part of this address. On the 20th of June, Mr. Pitt moved the thanks of the House to the managers "for their faithful management in their discharge of the trust reposed in them," which was carried. Mr. Burke, in the course of his reply, observed with great liberality, that prejudices against himself arising from personal friendship, or personal obligations to the accused, were too laudable for him to be discomposed at. He had thrown no general reflections on the Company's servants; he had merely repeated what Mr. Hastings himself had said of the troops serving in Oude; and the House had marked their opinion of the officers in the very terms he had used. As for the other expressions attributed to him, they had been much exaggerated and misrepresented.

This was the last day he appeared in the House of Commons, having immediately afterwards accepted the Chiltern Hundreds.

To a translation made some time before this by Mr. William Burke, of "Brissot's Address to his Constituents," Edmund, though without his name, gave a masterly preface, which, from exciting general notice, caused some demand for a book now no longer read by any one, and whose very name, notwithstanding the revolutionary notoriety of the author, is nearly forgotten. This introduction sketches a concise but powerful portrait of the Girondist faction, its principles and progress until overwhelmed and guillotined by that of Robespierre or the Mountain; but particularly of its chiefs Roland and Brissot, of the latter of whom he says,

"He is a chief actor in all the scenes which he presents. No man can object to him as a royalist: the royal party and the Christian religion never had a more determined enemy. In a word, it is Brissot—it is Brissot the republican, the jacobin, and philosopher, who is brought to give an account of jacobinism, and of republicanism, and of philosophy."

Immediately after the conclusion of the session, in July, 1794, the junction of the Portland party with Ministry, which previously existed in fact, took place in form by the Duke receiving a blue riband, the office of Third Secretary of State with the management of Ireland; Earl Fitzwilliam becoming at first President of the Council, and then Lord Lieutenant of that country; Earl Spencer, Lord Privy Seal, and soon afterward First Lord of the Admiralty; and Mr. Windham, Secretary at War; Lord Loughborough already held the office of Lord Chancellor.

This union, which was effected by Mr. Burke, from a conviction of its being intimately connected with the safety of the country, was stigmatized by the inconsiderate friends of Mr. Fox, as an interested desertion of him, their liege lord—as an act of moral rebellion against him whom they were politically bound to honour and obey. This story being still occasionally told, a single retrospective glance at the history of the party may serve to show its untruth—and that he in fact deserted them, and not they him.

It will be recollected that on being dismissed from his connexion with Ministry, by a contemptuous note from Lord North in 1774, Mr. Fox, as might be expected, joined, in fact if not in name, that division of opposition of which the Marquis of Rockingham was the head, and Mr. Burke the efficient leader and soul in the House of Commons. His admiration of the latter, which even at this time was unreserved, as well perhaps as a family disinclination to range himself under the banners of his father's former adversary, Lord Chatham, who led the other branch of the Minority, might have strengthened this determination; but in point of fact the Rockingham party contained by far the greater portion of talents, as well as of numbers; in its general principles he professed his warm acquiescence, and it promised the readiest road to power. A direct junction with it was therefore the most obvious step which an ambitious man, in furtherance of his own views, could well take. Mr. Burke, in a most friendly, and indeed affectionate letter already alluded to, written to him to Ireland, in October 1777, and beginning *My dear Charles,* instead of attempting to bias his choice of political friends by undue persuasion, expressly says, "Do not be in haste. Lay your foundations deep in public opinion. Though (as you are sensible) I have never given you the least hint of advice about joining yourself in a declared connexion with our party, nor do I now; yet, as I love that party very well, and am clear that you are better able to serve them than any man I know; I wish that things should be so kept as to leave you mutually very open to one another in all changes and contingencies; and I wish this the rather, because in order to be very great, as I am anxious you should be (always presuming that you are disposed to make a good use of power), you will certainly want some better support than merely that of the crown."*

The choice of his associates was therefore voluntarily, no doubt wisely, and at least deliberately made by Mr. Fox. He acceded ultimately to the Rockingham party and to its principles in form; he dissented from it in no matter of moment; on the contrary acknowledging, after the death of the Marquis, the Duke of Portland and Earl Fitzwilliam as the new heads of the connexion, and consulting them on all public measures, with the deference due to their rank and public weight in the country until the occurrence of the French Revolution, when his views either changed, or at least when the change became obvious to his coadjutors.

By this time, however, he had formed a considerable party of his own. He had gathered around him a number of ingenious and able men, many of them young, some of them almost grown up under his eye in Parliament, who, attracted by the splendour of his talents and reputation, eagerly sought his friendship, embraced his opinions, and who, disregarding or not acknowledging any other influence, looked to him alone as their leader. In return for this distinction, he probably found it necessary to accommodate some of his opinions to theirs; and the eventful scenes passing in France being well calculated to engage in their favour the ardent feelings of these friends as well as his own to a considerable degree, in addition to the hope of strong popular support, the re-action of such mingled feelings and expectations upon each other probably produced that degree of heat in the cause he had now embraced, and that dissent from his more ancient connexions which had hitherto been evident only on the single question of parliamentary reform. It was also urged by his adherents, that his views and principles in public affairs were more on a level with the free and enlightened spirit of the age than those of Mr. Burke, who was represented as fettered by old systems and prejudices, and too strong an adherence to the notions of the aristocracy in matters of government.

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* Burke's Works, vol. ix. 8vo. ed. p. 156.

Whatever be the cause, just at the critical moment in question, Mr. Fox appeared to push to excess in theory, and seeming approval in practice, doctrines which the Old Whigs, as well as others, conceived to be at variance with sound discretion. "In my journey with them through life," said Mr. Burke, "I met Mr. Fox in my road, and I travelled with him very cheerfully as long as he appeared to me to pursue the same direction with those in whose company I set out. In the latter stage of our progress a new scheme of liberty and equality was produced in the world, which either dazzled his imagination, or was suited to some new walks of ambition which were then opened to his view. The whole frame and fashion of his politics appeared to have suffered about that time a very material alteration."

At this period he withdrew his political allegiance from the acknowledged heads of the party, who were no longer consulted on any of his measures; and in Parliament he treated with asperity and ridicule their opinions and their fears for the public safety. Still, with the exception of Mr. Burke and a few others, the majority were unwilling to come to an open rupture; they were loth to quit him, and yet knew not how, with propriety or satisfaction to themselves, to continue to act with him; and it was not one of the least curious anomalies of the time to hear many who gave him their votes and general support in the House, condemn their own votes and all his proceedings in detail, the moment they quitted it. The general belief was, that time and experience would produce an alteration of sentiments as the crimes of the revolutionists became developed. More than three years' experience, however, convinced the whole of that body that his co-operation was not to be expected; the junction, as already stated, therefore took place, but the deliberate consideration that preceded, and the pecuniary arrangements which attended it, so far as he was concerned, left him without the slightest cause for complaint. It was petulant, therefore, and incorrect on the part of his partizans to accuse them of deserting him, when, as has been said, the contrary might be said to be nearer to the truth. *They* were the head of the connexion; to their system *he* had acceded; and if he found cause to dissent from the general principles which they had always hitherto acknowledged, the difference could not be justly laid to their charge.

The conduct of this body indeed at the moment displayed any thing rather than undue eagerness for power. The first determination of the Duke of Portland and Mr. Windham was *not* to accept of office, believing that more support might be given to government by an open and uninfluenced vote in Parliament than by becoming officially connected with it—a disinterested and patriotic idea certainly, but not perhaps a very sound conclusion in the business of governing a kingdom. Mr. Burke soon taught them, and was well enabled to teach them, better; for long and hardly-earned experience had satisfied him, in his own case if in no other, how comparatively useless are the most splendid talents and the best intentions, without the possession of power to give them effect. It is to his honour, that the handsome annuity settled by the party on Mr. Fox previous to their final separation, met with his warm approval.

Several attempts had been previously made by mutual friends to bring these distinguished men to something like their former intimacy; but Burke constantly observed that it would be mere mockery to meet in a formal interview, when their radical differences of political principle precluded either unity of feeling or of action. "My separation from Mr. Fox," said he, "is a principle and not a passion; I hold it a sacred duty while the present disorganizing system continues in operation in Europe, to confirm what I have said and written against it by this sacrifice, and it is no trifling test of my sincerity. To me the loss is great; but to what purpose would be our meeting when our views and conduct continue so essentially at variance? I could take no delight with him, nor he probably with me."

A calamity now overtook Mr. Burke of the most grievous as well as the most unexpected description, which all his religion and philosophy were in vain exerted to surmount, and which fell with additional weight from being so shortly preceded by the loss of his brother. This was the death of his son, Mr. Richard Burke, on the 2nd August, 1794, at the early age of thirty-six. His health, although for some time in an unsettled state, was so far from proving a source of uneasiness or apprehension to the fond father, that he had looked forward with anxiety to the moment when, by his own retirement from Parliament, he should be enabled to give him that opportunity for taking part in public affairs to which he conceived his talents in every way equal. Accordingly, immediately after he had vacated his seat, they both proceeded to Malton, and the parliamentary return of his son for the borough, according to his anxious desire, took place. The latter, on the next day, addressed the following affectionate letter to his cousin, now become Mrs. Haviland:—

"MY DEAREST MARY,

"I cannot let this post, which is the first after my election, go out without assuring you of my most affectionate remembrance, and giving you the satisfaction of receiving one of my first francs, as I am sure there is no person who takes a more sincere interest in any good event that can befal me. I should have written to you from London, but that the hurry I was in for some days before I left town rendered it nearly impossible. We have been much gratified by Captain Haviland's constant correspondence from Tonbridge and by your very good letters, which show how little excuse you had for writing so little before. But I see you are resolved to get rid of all your faults, which were, however, neither numerous nor important ones.

"I have by no means forgot your bracelets, and I hope you will be pleased with them as a token of my affection, though my purse does not enable me to make it very worthy of you. Nor have I forgot Captain Haviland's commission; Mr. Greenwood (I think his name is) the agent told me Colonel Forbes's regiment would be complete in about a month. My love to Captain Haviland and Mrs. Carey, who I suppose is still with you.

"Your's ever,

"RICHARD BURKE."

The father was further gratified by having him appointed secretary to his friend Earl Fitzwilliam, the new viceroy of Ireland; and at a dinner given to several friends on their return to town, he was anticipating for him, wholly unconscious of the impending danger, a brilliant career of service in that country, although the guests viewed his hectic and disordered countenance with very different emotions. None of these, notwithstanding their intimacy, ventured to express their fears. Neither did the physicians think it prudent to alarm him by premature disclosure, in case of the disease, which was judged to be a decline, proving gradual and lingering; Dr. Brocklesby giving it as his opinion, from perfect acquaintance with the strong paternal affection and sensitive feelings of Mr. Burke, that a knowledge of the real nature of the disease and of the danger attending it, would probably prove fatal to him sooner than to his son. Cromwell House at Brompton was however taken for him by their advice, to be in the air, and yet near to town preparatory to his journey to Ireland. Here he became rapidly worse; and concealment being no longer possible, the melancholy truth was at length communicated, just a week before the fatal event occurred, to the father; who, from this time till the fate of his offspring was decided, slept not, scarcely tasted food, or ceased from the most affecting lamentations; seeming to justify the prediction of the physician, that had it been communicated to him sooner his own death might have been the result.

In the closing scene itself there were some circumstances sufficiently affecting; but of these Dr. French Laurence, the civilian, and afterwards well known in Parliament, the intimate friend of Mr. Burke, and a constant visitor at his house, must be the historian. A series of his letters, addressed to the senior Mrs. Haviland, descriptive of the melancholy scenes now passing in the family, exists, which I have great pleasure in submitting to the reader. They are not merely well, but pathetically written; evincing all that feeling and commiseration which one generous mind suffers in witnessing the affliction of another, and that other a great and admired man, as well as an esteemed friend.

"My dear Madam, "August 1st, 1794.

"As Dr. King undoubtedly communicated to you the melancholy contents of my yesterday's letter, you will certainly be anxious to know whether another day has brought any new hope. There is a little, feeble and faint. The sentence is at least respited for a time. A second letter from Mr. Burke yesterday in the evening, informed me that the physicians forbade him to despair. At the same time I received a note from Dr. Brocklesby, at whose house I had called, and this morning I have seen him. He says there is no such immediate danger as his father apprehends, but he fears the ultimate event.

"The disorder is a consumption, which has however not yet actually reached the substance of the lungs, but has spread to the lower part of the trachea, as it is technically called, or the wind-pipe. It is supposed to have extended as far as the point where the tube divides itself into two branches. The family are with poor Richard in country lodgings a little beyond Brompton. It is a house of mourning indeed, a scene of affliction, Dr. Brocklesby says, almost too much for him, who, as a physician, is inured to these sights, and in some degree callous to them. Mrs. Burke, he says, sustains herself nobly, to keep up the fortitude of her husband.

Mr. Burke writes to me that she seeks tranquillity in prayer; he is himself (as he tells me) almost dried up; there is however, in his last letter, plainly a gleam of hope, and a tone of comparative calmness of spirit. The conclusion of his first letter was highly affecting. He ended with an abrupt exclamation, "Oh! my brother died in time."—Some of them wrote to William Burke yesterday; I should otherwise have written. The letter was franked I suppose by poor Richard.—Present my best compliments to all your society. I write in great haste. Adieu.

"Dear madam,
"Very sincerely,
"Your afflicted humble servant,
"F. LAURENCE."

"DEAR MADAM, "August 4th, 1794.

"When I shortly informed you of the melancholy event on Saturday, I was acquainted with the event, and nothing more, from the mouth of Dr. Brocklesby. Some of the particulars I have since collected, as well as I could; and as every little circumstance must be interesting to you, who had known him from his infancy, I shall faithfully relate to you what I have heard. It may afflict you, but there is a pleasure in such sorrow, which he who cannot taste, deserves to be pitied.

"From my former letters to Dr. King and yourself, you know every thing till the night previous to his death. During that night he was restless and discomposed. In the morning his lips were observed to have become black. His voice, however, was better, and for the first time since his attack on the preceding Monday, some asses' milk and some other little sustenance which he took, remained quietly on his stomach. But his father and mother did not suffer themselves to be too much flattered by these favourable symptoms, which might be, what they too surely proved to be in the event. Their lamentations reached him where he lay. He instantly arose from his bed, and to make his emaciated appearance less shocking to his parents, changed his linen and washed himself; he then desired Mr. and Mrs. Webster,* whose tender care of him was unremitting, to support him towards the door of the room where his father and mother were sitting in tears. As soon as he arrived at the door, he exerted himself to spring forward alone, and treading firmly, (as you remember was his usual mode of walking, but then treading so more studiously for the purpose of convincing his father how little his strength was diminished) he crossed the room to the window, and afterwards to the quarter where they were. He endeavoured to enter into conversation with his father, but grief keeping the latter silent, he said, after some observations on his own condition, " Why, Sir, do you not chide me for these unmanly feelings? I am under no terror; I feel myself better and in spirits, yet my heart flutters I know not why. Pray talk to me, Sir; talk of religion, talk of morality, talk if you will on indifferent subjects." Then turning round, he asked, " What noise is that? Does it rain? Oh! no; it is the rustling of the wind through the trees;" and immediately with a voice as clear as ever in his life, with the most correct and impressive delivery, and a more than common ease and grace of action, he repeated three beautiful lines from Adam's morning hymn in Milton. You will certainly anticipate me in the lines; they are favourite lines of his father's, and were so, as I recollect, of his poor uncle, to whom he was then going with these very lines on his tongue.

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* Old and faithful servants in the family.

> "His praise, ye winds, that from four quarters blow,
> Breathe soft or loud; and wave your tops, ye pines,
> With ev'ry plant in sign of worship wave."

He began again, and again pronounced the verses with the same happiness of elocution and gesture, waved his head in sign of worship, and worshipping, sunk into the arms of his parents as in a profound and sweet sleep.

"Afflicted as I have been for this year past with the apprehension of this calamity, I now, on calm consideration, thank God for all the circumstances of his end; since his departure was fixed in the inscrutable purposes of Providence. I thank God, that his father and mother did not seriously feel his danger till the last week of his life; I thank him that they had some short time of preparation; and I thank Him also that they were not doomed for whole months, as the physician had expected, to languish and consume themselves with unavailing sorrow over a beloved, and justly beloved son, dying by inches before their eyes.

"The behaviour of our two poor remaining friends is such as might be expected from them by those who rightly knew both their sensibility and strength of reason: though perhaps for the exertion of the latter under so severe a dispensation, we hardly gave them sufficient credit. During the first day, the father was at times, as I have heard, truly terrible in his grief. He occasionally worked himself up to an agony of affliction, and then bursting away from all controul, would rush to the room where his son lay, and throw himself headlong, as it happened, on the body, the bed, or the floor. Yet at intervals he attended and gave directions relative to every little arrangement, which their situation rendered necessary, pleasing himself most with thinking what would be most consonant to the living wishes and affections of his lost son.

"At intervals too he would argue against the ineffectual sorrow of his wife. She, on the other hand, sometimes broke into fits of violent weeping, sometimes showed a more quiet but a more determined grief, and at other times again a more serene composure than her husband. Instead of dashing herself down, like him, she only lamented, that when on Thursday, by an accidental fall she sprained her wrist, 'it had not been her neck:' but when her husband attempted to persuade her, that she had no business still to remain in the house, she answered steadily, 'No, Edmund; while he remains here I will not go.' I am happy, however, to inform you that on Saturday evening she took and gave a promise that neither of them would ever enter more the chamber where their son lay. They have repented; both however have fulfilled their mutual promises, and she has consented, notwithstanding her resolution above mentioned, to leave the house this day.

"This letter is longer than I intended, or than my time can well afford. But you, I am sure, will not think it too minute: you will rather find ten thousand omissions of things, into which you would enquire; and I perhaps could have added many things, if I had stopped to consider what I should write. Yet on the whole, if I can trust the information of Mr. and Mrs. Nugent and Mrs. Carey, compared with what I received from the servant of our departed friend, I believe I have given you a sufficiently correct notion in general of the circumstances attending the fatal event, as well as the present situation of things in that miserable ruin of a family.

"On Saturday, I understand, that I shall probably be at Beaconsfield.—Oh! God! on what an occasion!—perhaps for the last time, except in transient visits to those friends there, whom I shall ever esteem.

"Most sincerely,
"Your's ever,
"FRENCH LAWRENCE.

"P. S. I have just received a note from Dr. King. He says, 'none or little change yet for the better.' Dupont, who brought it to me, tells me that after poor Richard sunk down, he was undressed and put to bed, where poor Jane Burke, rubbing him with vinegar, or any other such vain methods of recalling his fleeting spirit, received one last sigh, and with her own hand then closed his eyes for ever."

"DEAR MADAM, "August 7th, 1794.

"At last I have seen poor Burke. His grief was less intolerable than I had supposed. He took me by surprise, or I should *then* have avoided him.

He told me he was bringing his mind by degrees to his miserable situation, and he lamented that he went to see his son after death, as the dead countenance has made such an impression on his imagination that he cannot retrace in his memory the features and air of his living Richard. He did not stay long in the room, but from Dr. King, whom I also saw last night for the first time, I learned more particulars.

"He confirmed the accounts which I gave you in my former letters, with some slight differences. His father was alone in the room when he walked in as I informed you, but the subsequent conversation did not pass there. After staying a very short time, poor Richard returned to his bed-chamber and laid himself on his bed. It was then the conversation took place in presence of both his parents, and when he asked if it rained, his father, and not himself, explained what the cause really was—the wind rustling through the trees. On which, after twice repeating the lines from Milton, he sunk into the arms of his parents, and a short struggle ensuing, Mrs. Burke was prevailed upon to retire, till Dr. King announced to her that all was over.

"Yesterday, for the first time, Mr. and Mrs. Burke ate their dinner; but he with more appetite comparatively than she did. He has in general slept pretty well. She I believe not so well. William Burke has come, but has not yet seen them. He weeps like a child.

"I went or sent yesterday to all the newspapers, and got promises that the paragraph * should not be

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* The purport of the paragraph here alluded to does not appear, but it probably related to some of the circumstances in the Burke family connected with the loss they had just experienced.

inserted. At one place I learn that it actually was cut out for the purpose of being inserted. At the Herald office I was told that it actually came from a correspondent in the country, and that it was in a female hand-writing. They assured me that they would stop and send to me any thing in future communicated to them on the same subject, if any such should reach them; at the same time they observed that they could not answer that they might not put in paragraphs from the same quarter, which, being distant allusions, they might not understand, though the lady and myself, as well as our friends, might very well know what was meant.

"I am, dear Madam,
"Very sincerely, your's ever,
"F. LAWRENCE."

"MY DEAR MADAM, "August 12, 1794.

"At last I have had the pleasure (I may truly say under the circumstances) of seeing our dear Mrs. Burke; and I have the satisfaction of informing you that I found her better than I was taught to expect.

"After the first meeting she was more composed than he, or she played her part more naturally in order not to discompose him. When I was separated from her arms, he took me by the hand, and spoke to me with a tone of artificial and laborious fortitude: she saw through the disguise and gently reproved him for not supporting himself as he promised. She entered occasionally with apparent sincerity into some of the topics of consolation upon which I touched a little, when any expressions of his seemed to render them necessary; and occasionally she took part in the general topics of conversation which were introduced. But once when he had walked to the other end of the room, and once when he was reading to himself, she raised her hands and cast upward at the same time a piteous look of silent affliction. His mind seemed to be more fully engaged than her's, by the general conversation, but he had frequent, though not excessive, bursts of grief.

"I was very much delighted with one thing which I heard. Mrs. Burke, who for three nights had taken a gentle opiate, omitted it on Sunday night, and slept well without it. She assured me too that the complaint in her limbs was at present better.

"I was told by him, that they had read a good deal in the course of the day, which I very much approved.

"On my asking when they would go into the country, she turned to him, who answered, whenever she pleased. She then said some time in the course of the week. I expressed a desire to go with them, but she only said, without any direct yes or no, that they should have some business. At parting he begged me to come as much to him as I could. It was however so much the request of poor William and Mrs. Nugent at Beaconsfield that I would come, that my plan is at all events to come to you for a few days; or if the Captain and Mrs. Thomas Haviland take up their abode with you, then to take possession of his house. I can then be at Butler's Court all the day or the greatest part of it, as may be useful and most convenient. I beg you will not think it necessary to give yourself the trouble of an answer, but arrange things at your discretion for the best against Thursday, or whatever day we may come.

"I am, dear Madam,
"Very sincerely your's,
"FR. LAWRENCE."

"DEAR MADAM, "August 13, 1794.

"Yesterday evening I was happy again to learn that our poor Jane Burke had slept well without the aid of medicine. Mr. Burke was somewhat lower, which a little affected her, but I think it was only the natural progress of his grief, settling regularly from sudden bursts mingled with intervals of forced composure, into a more even and sober melancholy.

"They talk of removing to Butler's Court on Friday, but said nothing inviting me with them. I shall therefore come, and on reflection, to Captain Haviland's house, as I bring papers with me to occupy my leisure minutes.—If I should not see your son, I presume you have authority sufficient to give me possession.

"As you heard the contents of a letter* which I wrote from your house, I hold it due to my truly noble friend that you should also know the answer. It bears, in every respect the express image of his mind. He explains to me his silence when Dr. W. King mentioned to him his letter to Lord ———. He says that he never has asked Lord ———, or any friend of his own who possesses the same sort of parliamentary interest and makes the same use of it that Lord ——— does, a syllable respecting the destination of it. And this is a fixed principle with him. This was the reason of his taking no immediate notice of what Dr. King told him. He then passes to the general part of my letter, and informs me, 'He is glad to know that Parliament is my wish, because he will endeavour to contribute to its accomplishment, although he cannot speak with precision as to the mode or time of effecting it, and he hopes it is useless to assure me that he cannot have a greater pleasure than in testifying to me and the world the friendship which he feels for me.'

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* To Mr. Burke; which expressed his wish to get into Parliament, and remotely hinted at the exertion of his influence to aid him in the attempt.

"It gives me the most lively satisfaction on reflection to be able to say, that what I expressed in my letter to him I sincerely felt. I had no doubt of his friendship—I write in great haste.—Adieu till we meet.

"Very sincerely yours,
"FRENCH LAWRENCE."

The son thus deeply lamented had always conducted himself with so much filial duty and affection towards both parents, and more especially in soothing the unavoidable irritations to which his father was subjected by the prominent part he took in public affairs, as to sharpen the natural feelings of sorrow of the parent, by reflecting that he had also lost a counsellor and friend. Their confidence on all subjects was even more unreserved than commonly prevails between father and son, and their esteem for each other higher. The son looked to the father as one of the first, if not the very first, character in history; the father had formed the very highest opinion of the talents of the son, and among his friends rated them superior to his own; he had enlarged the house at Beaconsfield for his particular pursuits and accommodation; he consulted him for some years before his death on almost every subject, whether of a public or private nature, that occurred, and very often followed his judgment in preference to his own where they happened to differ. He possessed solid parts, much knowledge, and firmness and decision, united with strict integrity of mind.

The loss of such a companion and confidant, the unexpected and irremediable destruction of the hopes entertained of his advancement and fame, and as the only remaining child he possessed, the consequent extinction of the hopes of descendants to continue his name, was naturally felt with excessive poignancy. It shook his frame indeed to its centre, and though without the slightest effect on his intellectual energies, his bodily powers rapidly declined. He never afterwards could bear to look towards Beaconsfield Church, the place of his interment; nor was he perhaps for any length of time ever absent from his mind except when engaged in literary composition, which therefore became rather a relief than a labour. The late Bishop of Meath (O'Beirne) used to say that the first time he had an opportunity of seeing him after the melancholy event, he was shocked to observe the change which it had produced in his appearance; his countenance displayed traces of decay and of mental anguish, his chest was obviously much sunk, and altogether exhibited the appearance of one bowed down both in frame and in spirit by affliction.

Nearly all his private letters and publications written after this time contain many and pathetic allusions to his loss, and in his conversation they were still more frequent. He called him " the hope of his house," " the prop of his age," " his other and better self." Writing to a relation on the birth of a son, he said, " may he live to be the staff of your age and close your eyes in peace, instead of, like me, reversing the order of nature and having the melancholy office to close *his*." To Mr. (now Baron) Smith he writes: " So heavy a calamity has fallen upon me as to disable me for business and to disqualify me for repose. The existence I have I do not know that I can call life * *. Good nights to you—I never can have any." In a private letter to the same gentleman he says, " Yes; the life which has been so embittered cannot long endure. The grave will soon close over me and my dejections." To Sir Hercules Langrishe he talks of the remainder of his " short and cheerless existence in this world." In a letter to Lord Auckland, he says, " For myself or for my family (alas! I have none) I have nothing to hope or to fear in this world." The *Letter to a noble Lord* speaks of " the sorrows of a desolate old man." And again, " The storm has gone over me; and I lye like one of those old oaks which the late hurricane has scattered about me. I am stripped of all my honours; I am torn up by the roots and lye prostrate on the earth." " I am alone. I have none to meet my enemies in the gate. I greatly deceive myself if in this hard season of life I would give a peck of refuse wheat for all that is called fame and honour in the world." To William Elliot, Esq. he writes, "desolate at home, stripped of my boast, my hope, my consolation, my helper, my counsellor, and my guide. You know in part what I have lost, and would to God I could clear myself of all neglect and fault in that loss," and numberless others of a similar sorrowful import are scattered through his subsequent writings. It was a matter of the least consideration that except for this heavy affliction Mr. Burke was to have been raised to the honours of the peerage, but become now infirm, childless, and desponding, every feeling of ambition became extinguished in his breast, as the preceding expressions plainly intimate. Notwithstanding this, perhaps, the honour should have been bestowed and accepted; it would have been a satisfaction, if not to himself, at least to his friends and to his admirers, as a testimony of national gratitude to a man of such extraordinary and varied talents, exerted with extraordinary vigour in every department of the public service; and as a passport to the greater favour and consideration of that numerous class of the community (and those too not of the least rank or influence), who would estimate at a very different value the exertions and services of plain Mr. Burke, and those of Lord Burke, or Lord Beaconsfield.

In person, young Burke was not so tall or so muscular as his father, but well formed and active, his features smaller and more delicate, though handsome and expressive, supposed to bear some resemblance to those of his uncle Richard, and his complexion florid. A picture of him by Sir Joshua Reynolds is an admirable likeness, "as exact," said a literary lady, a friend of the family, who saw it at the painter's before it was sent home, "as the reflection of a mirror." From this portrait his father, soon after his death, caused a print to be engraved, which preserves much of the spirit of the original. Underneath it, after his name, age, and the date of his death, are the following lines, altered in a slight degree from Dryden's elegiac poem of Eleonora—

"As precious gums are not for common fire,
They but perfume the temple and expire;
So was he soon exhaled and vanish'd hence,
A short sweet odour at a vast expense."

Adding to these, as at once characteristic of his grief, and his pride,

"O dolor atque decus."

The following character of him from the pen of Dr. Walker King, the present Bishop of Rochester, his intimate friend from youth, appeared in the newspapers a few days afterward.

"Died on Saturday last, at Cromwell House, aged 36, Richard Burke, Esq. MP. for the Borough of Malton, and the only son of the Right Honourable Edmund Burke.

"The irreparable loss which his country, his friends and relations have sustained by this event, is known best to those who knew him best.

"His talents, whether for business or speculation, were not exceeded by any which the present or perhaps any former age could boast. In that share, unfortunately small, which fell to his lot in public affairs, the superior abilities which he manifested were acknowledged by the first characters in public life. Perhaps it was owing to their magnitude and solidity, disproportioned to the currency of the times, that they remained without farther employment.*

“ The variety and extent of his erudition was great: but what distinguished him in literature was the justness, refinement, and accuracy of his taste.

“ In society his manners were elegant; and the best judges both at home and abroad, thought him one of the best bred men of the age. He was, at the same time, rigidly and severely sincere. He was of moderate stature, but of a beautiful countenance, and an elegant and graceful figure: He wanted no accomplishment of body or mind.

“ In the discharge of all the duties of friendship, and in acts of charity and benevolence, his exertions were without bounds: they were often secret—always, like all his other virtues, unostentatious. He had no expences which related to himself; what he wanted from the narrowness of his means, was made up from the abundance of his heart and mind; and the writer of this, who knew him long and intimately, and was himself under the most important obligations to him, could tell how many deserving objects he assisted, and some of whom he snatched from ruin by his wise counsel and indefatigable exertions. He never gave up a pursuit of this kind whilst it was possible to continue it.

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* This was the opinion of many of Mr. Burke's friends, relative to the major part of the Ministry, arising no doubt from the obvious jealousy which Mr. Pitt occasionally displayed to having men in the Cabinet with him, whose talents might interfere either in the public or in the royal opinion, with his own. Mr. Burke himself also conceived there was a disinclination to bring forward his son into public life. In the letter to William Elliot, Esq. (1795) he says:

“ Had it pleased Providence to have spared him for the trying situations that seem to be coming on, notwithstanding that he was sometimes *a little dispirited by the disposition* which we thought shown to depress him and set him aside; yet he was always buoyed up again; and on one or two occasions, he discovered what might be expected from the vigour and elevation of his mind, from his unconquerable fortitude, and from the extent of his resources for every purpose of speculation and of action.”

"But it was in the dearer relations of nature that his mind, in which every thing was beautiful and in order, shone with all its lustre. To his father and mother his affection and assiduity were such as passed all description, and all examples that the writer of this has ever seen: here every thing of *self* was annihilated; here he was as perfect as human nature can admit. At home and to his family, he was indeed all in all. He lived in and for his parents, and he expired in their arms.

"A sincerely afflicted mind seeks a momentary consolation in drawing this imperfect sketch of his ever to be honoured and lamented friend.

"Gray's Inn, Aug. 3, 1794. "W. K."

CHAPTER V.

Correspondence with William Smith, Esq. (of Ireland) on the Roman Catholic Question.—Second Letter to Sir Hercules Langrishe, on the same subject.—Letter to William Elliot, Esq. on the Attack of the Duke of Norfolk, in the House of Lords.—Letters to Mrs. Salisbury Haviland.—Letter to Lord Auckland, with Remarks on his Pamphlet.—Letter to William Smith, Esq.—Thoughts and Details on Scarcity.—Anecdotes. —Grant of a Pension.—Letter to a Noble Lord in Reply to an Attack of the Duke of Bedford, and the Earl of Lauderdale in the House of Lords.

FOR some months after the afflicting loss he had experienced, the mind of Mr. Burke was too seriously hurt by it to take so active an interest as he had hitherto done in most questions connected with public affairs; nor did his friends deem it decorous to intrude upon the almost sacred privacies of a grief so profound by solicitations for his opinion. But as he became more composed, a return to the consideration of such matters, which had long been a species of daily aliment to him, was eagerly desired by them as serving to prevent the continual intrusion of more melancholy thoughts. His communications with Ministry, however, from this time forward in a great degree ceased with the life of his son, his influence, whatever it was, being exerted through the channel of the press, and therefore wholly public.

The question of Roman Catholic Emancipation occupied then, as it still continues to do, a large share of the attention of the statesmen of England and Ireland. In the latter country, as being chiefly concerned in the result, it was, of course, warmly debated; the late concessions there, the continued exertions of Mr. Grattan, and the inflammatory state of politics altogether, producing in many a conviction of its necessity; in others as strong an aversion to any further indulgence. An appeal to Mr. Burke from several of his friends in Dublin, whose opinions were either not fully formed, or who wished their doubts on the matter entirely resolved, was therefore made. Among the number was his young friend, Mr. Smith. He had now secured a seat in the legislature of his country, and being further placed in the not uncommon situation in Ireland of having one parent of the Protestant and the other of the Roman Catholic faith, and brought up a Protestant himself, he considered it no less desirable than just, to gain from such a man all the additional light he could throw upon the subject, in order to be himself enabled to act wisely and conscientiously towards his religion, towards his parent as one of the obnoxious persuasion, and towards his country. His letter on this occasion is useful to advert to for its own sake, as well as for the sake of the answer it produced.

"I am about to make a very usual return for great kindness, by imposing a further tax on him from whom I have received it. The funds, however, on which I draw, whatever modesty or prudence may induce you to allege, are universally known to be abundant. Besides, what I ask for is advice; in giving which you can enrich me without impoverishing yourself.

"You are aware that a measure of vast importance will shortly come before our Parliament. I mean that on which the Catholics have judiciously enough bestowed the title of Emancipation. I feel the magnitude of this question; and wish greatly to have upon it the assistance of your views. Your opinion I indeed anticipate; or, more properly speaking, know; and what I now solicit from you is rather an outline (I cannot presume to look for more), of the grounds on which your judgment has been formed.

"The popularity of this measure seems, with many of its advocates, to be founded upon sentiments which I do not entertain. The fashionable toast, of 'Religion established; and no established religion!' is a quaint treachery which I cannot prevail with myself to echo; nor do I concur in the impartial nonchalance of those who think the Protestant and Catholic doctrines to be both so good, that they neither care which is the best, nor very well know which is which. I suspect that this liberal inattention to specific difference might be traced to a contempt for Christianity in general. At all events, it is a liberality to which I make no pretensions; and, on the contrary, if the want of it be bigotry, must admit myself a bigot. I am a Protestant, not merely because it is the faith in which I happened to be brought up, but on conviction; and not only consider the Catholic system to be erroneous, but to be infected with errors which, as well from their intrinsic character, as from their political relations, are of a tendency the most pernicious; and rather disentitle the professors of this religion to liberal indulgence, than the reverse. At least these would not, I fear, be likely to practise the toleration which they recommend; and cannot well rest their claims upon the Gospel precept. * * * *

"If I have spoken strongly of Catholic doctrines, their tendency and danger; it yet should seem that I have not imbibed prejudices at all hostile to the professors of that religion. My father, whose line of politics it would be my wish to pursue, as long as he was in Parliament, supported their pretensions. My mother, a most excellent woman, and all her family are Catholics; between whom and me a very cordial and affectionate intercourse subsists. But knowing my connexion with Doctor Duigenan, you may suspect me of having taken up some of his opinions; seasoned too with a portion of his warmth and zeal. This, however, I can assure you, is far from being the case. He is a well informed, able, and, I think, upright man; with an intellect perhaps coarse; beyond all question strong. But still his views of things are very different from mine. There is something as it were dissonant, and antipathetic, in the frame and construction of our minds; and of whatever friendship there is between us, neither *idem velle,* nor *idem sentire,* are the source. Besides, he has ever held me and my understanding very cheap: and though his estimate may have been a just one, it was not calculated to seduce me into an implicit adoption of all his thoughts.

"But if the circumstance of my mother's family being Catholic has protected me from prejudice, it has at the same time laid open sources of information, to which persons situated differently from me might not have access. If many of that persuasion be, as many are, exempt from all those prejudices, which armed with power might lead to mischief, the exemption I fear arises rather from individual character, or peculiar situation, than from the genius of the religion. They are liberal, not *because,* but *notwithstanding* they are Catholics. Besides, whatever dangerous spirit popery may be suspected to contain, is repressed and chilled, while this religion is under controul and in the shade. But we know from Scripture that the smallest of all seeds, if allowed to grow and flourish, may overshadow nations.

"Perhaps the language I have been using may seem inconsistent with sentiments which you have heard me more than once avow; and you may suppose that I am writing my recantation from all favourable dispositions to the church of Rome. This, however, is not the case. I am strongly disposed to give the Catholics what they ask: I wish to be convinced that it would be right to do so; and what I have been saying merely tends to this, that they ought not to be gratified at our expense. But we should not, in an effusion of liberality, neglect our own defence; or by dismantling the fortresses of the true religion established amongst us, lay it open to the pious inroads, and with reference to their motive, perhaps laudable oppressions, which *pro salute animarum,* our Catholic brethren might think it their duty to inflict."

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"I am presumptuous in discussing the question with you as I do; but should be more so, if I were not prepared to surrender my notions, with unaffected deference and humility, to your opinion. I am not so arrogant, as from my indulging in these dissertations you might think. I do not forget that I have not been quite one year in parliament, nor quite twenty-nine years in the world; and shall, besides, in favour of the Catholics, be *convinced*, not *against* but with my *will*.—That a man's religious opinions should abridge his civil powers, (in other words that he should be mulcted for being conscientious), is a maxim which, in the abstract, I reprobate as profane; and should feel indebted to the reasoner who would show me that the opposite axiom can be brought to bear upon the subject now before us."

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"I have myself observed, that since the last relaxations of the Popery law, there are certain privileges which though in theory the Catholics possess, they have not begun perfectly, if at all, to enjoy in practice. These barren and unproductive rights are worse than none at all. They exasperate and tantalize those who on the contrary should be conciliated and contented; and perhaps this provoking evil could not have arisen, if we had taken as good care of the Catholics as of the Pope; and surrounded their civil rights with a body-guard of political powers, for their protection. A certain number of these latter they indeed possess; and the question is, whether the guard be strong enough for their defence; or can be further strengthened, compatibly with a due regard to our own safety.

"Of some of the donations which we have made, I (as you know) disapprove. In giving their forty shilling freeholders the elective franchise, I think that we did wrong;* and even doubt whether we did not lose an opportunity for depriving this grovelling class; the *plebs infima* of our country, whether Protestant or Popish, of the right (or rather abuse and wrong) of voting; and for conferring this privilege indiscriminately on twenty-pound freeholders of both religions. You have had the patience to read, and the kindness to approve, the tract in which I started this idea. But now the thing is done; the concession is made; and in making it we furnished an argument for the present claims. The power of forty shilling freeholders is, in fact and practice, the influence (and that it should be so, is perhaps the lesser evil), of those landlords under whom they hold. It is these latter therefore, that in thus extending the elective franchise, we have aggrandized. In finding a market for the flock, it is not the sheep, but the owner of the stock and pasture, that we serve. Thus, while Catholics are ineligible into Parliament, we may (contrary to our intention) have been aggrandizing the Protestant gentry at their expense.

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* This opinion does credit to Mr. Smith's sagacity, for Ireland would now willingly get rid of the abuse if she could; it will be remembered that a measure for this purpose was introduced lately (1825) into Parliament, intended to follow the fortunes of that for the relief of the Catholics, and accordingly they were thrown out together.

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"You have already observed, I believe it is in your letter to Sir Hercules Langrishe, that the penal code ought not to have been even touched, except by those, who were prepared for its entire, though perhaps gradual abrogation. But without disputing this, at least without disputing it directly, I may suggest, that of the liberty which identifies with power, we may with propriety be frugal; lest in bestowing freedom upon others, we should be imposing chains upon ourselves. Our security and liberties ought not to be the fund, out of which, by deductions from it, the Catholic demands are to be supplied.

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"But it will seldom be a sufficient reason for rejecting an application, that it is ungraciously or even insolently made. The intrinsic merits and reasonableness of the demand itself should, in general, be gone into. Nor though petitioners should falsely represent their circumstances to be worse than these really are, ought we merely upon this account to decline improving their situation, if it can be ameliorated with safety to ourselves. Complainants nine times out of ten magnify the alleged grievance which they are seeking to have removed, the delusions of *amour propre* first aggravate it to themselves; and their representation of what they endured again enhances upon this; in order that the supposed magnitude of their suffering may supply an argument for its removal. Resentment may also sometimes contribute its part; and induce them to exaggerate their oppressions, both to themselves, and to those whom they consider as oppressors.

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"The longer the provocations last, the more exasperation and ill-blood will be produced; and the greater will be the risk which must at length perhaps be run. If then the restrictive system with respect to Catholics ought at some time to have an end, what better moment could be chosen than the present, when, from the loyal conduct which they have hitherto pursued, it may be inferred that they have not yet been stung or stimulated into disaffection; a moment in which allegiance is exposed to unprecendented perils and temptations; and swarms of innovators are busy in every quarter of the country; when old establishments are *sloping their heads to their foundations;* and all that is passing round us in the world seems to inculcate the necessity of cementing for our own security *id firmissimum imperium, quo obedientes gaudent?*

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"We ought not, if it can be avoided, to inflict upon our brethren the unkindness which she* feared from imperious enemies, for her son: we ought not to hold the cup of privilege to their lips; and then stint them to a mere relish, better calculated to inflame their thirst, than to assuage it. This is a moment not merely for doing strict and penurious justice; but for gratifying feelings, and exciting zeal. Suppose the Catholics are now requiring, not what may be called the necessaries, and ordinary sustenance of civil life, but a regale of honours and distinctions, to please the palate and soothe the pride of their ambition; why should they not ask this? why should they not obtain it, if it can be given with safety? if it can be given, without manifest and very serious danger? Why should Catholics be doomed to thirst in vain for honours, the thirst for which is a main incentive to public spirit, and has perhaps its origin in public virtue? Why should the genial current of their fair affections and natural appetites be frozen? Or how at least can we who freeze it, in the same breath require that it shall flow warmly for our defence? Can we prevent a Catholic from feeling that he is as well entitled by nature to distinction as we are? that he is as well qualified, as any Protestant, for filling an eminent situation with credit to himself, and advantage to the public? Or what more serious peril can we well incur, than that of convincing this great body of our countrymen that, under the present order of things, they must stifle their fair ambition, for that we consider their depression as a *sine quâ non* of our safety?

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* An allusion to Andromache's fears for the captivity of her son Astyanax.

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"I have stated my difficulties, in order that you should remove them, or indicate a road to liberality, by taking which I may avoid them. Much in fact of what I have been considering as arduous, you may show me to be mere mole-hills, which an erroneous view of the subject has magnified into mountains. Or, as I said before, leaving these mountains, as Mahomet left his, in their own place, you may, instead of going to them as he did, point out another road; a pass, by means of which we can elude them all. Accordingly (indeed at all events), I am far from expecting that you should discuss my objections *seriatim;* or regularly refute them all. In perusing them without impatience, you will have been sufficiently indulgent. What I ask for is your opinion; and such objections as you pass unnoticed, I shall consider you to have overruled."

The reply of Mr. Burke bears date January 29th, 1795, and being handed about in Dublin, found its way into the press, though without permission of the writer or his correspondent. He does not enter into the detail of the question with all the minuteness perhaps which was solicited, but gives his views upon it generally, and pleads for the removal of the whole of the disabilities of the Roman Catholic body. Speaking of their religion itself, he applies to it the language of men of sense and statesmen—that as the faith of four-fifths of the community of the country, it should not be hostilely treated—that as a thing in itself irremoveable by either force or persuasion, it should be the business of wisdom not to bicker and contend with, but to make the most of it.

He urges unanimity upon the Christian world, as now more than ever necessary when the foundations of christianity itself were attacked, and that, were it possible to dispute, rail, and persecute the Roman Catholics out of their prejudices, it is not probable they would take refuge in ours, but rather in an indifference to all religion; and that were the Catholic religion destroyed by infidels, it is absurd to suppose that the Protestant church could long endure.

"All the principal religions in Europe," he says, "stand upon one common bottom. The support, that the whole, or the favoured parts, may have in the secret dispensations of Providence, it is impossible to say; but humanly speaking, they are all *prescriptive* religions. They have all stood long enough to make prescription, and its chain of legitimate prejudices, their main stay. The people, who compose the four grand divisions of christianity, have now their religion as an habit, and upon authority, and not on disputation; as all men, who have their religion derived from their parents, and the fruits of education, *must* have it; however the one, more than the other, may be able to reconcile his faith to his own reason, or to that of other men.

"Depend upon it they must all be supported, or they must all fall in the crash of a common ruin. The Catholics are the far more numerous part of the Christians in your country; and how can christianity (that is now the point in issue) be supported under the persecution, or even under the discountenance, of the greater number of Christians? It is a great truth, and which in one of the debates I stated as strongly as I could to the House of Commons in the last session, that if the Catholic religion is destroyed by the infidels, it is a most contemptible and absurd idea, that this, or any Protestant church, can survive that event. Therefore my humble and decided opinion is, that all the three religions, prevalent more or less in various parts of these islands, ought all, in subordination to the legal establishments, as they stand in the several countries, to be all countenanced, protected, and cherished; and that in Ireland particularly the Roman Catholic religion should be upheld in high respect and veneration; and should be, in its place, provided with all the means of making it a blessing to the people who profess it; that it ought to be cherished as a good (though not as the most preferable good, if a choice was now to be made), and not tolerated as an inevitable evil.

"If this be my opinion as to the Catholic religion, as a sect, you must see, that I must be to the last degree averse to put a man, upon that account, upon a bad footing with relation to the privileges, which the fundamental laws of this country give him as a subject. I am the more serious on the positive encouragement to be given to this religion (always, however, as secondary), because the serious and earnest belief and practice of it by its professors forms, as things stand, the most effectual barrier, if not the sole barrier against jacobinism. The Catholics form the great body of the lower ranks of your community; and no small part of those classes of the middling, that came nearest to them. You know that the seduction of that part of mankind from the principles of religion, morality, subordination, and social order, is the great object of the jacobins. Let them grow lax, sceptical, careless, and indifferent with regard to religion, and so sure as we have an existence, it is not a zealous Anglican or Scottish church principle, but direct jacobinism, which will enter into that breach. Two hundred years dreadfully spent in experiments to force that people to change the form of their religion have proved fruitless. You have now your choice, for full four-fifths of your people, of the Catholic religion or jacobinism. If things appear to you to stand on this alternative, I think you will not be long in making your option.

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"As to the capacity of sitting in Parliament, after all the capacities for voting, for the army, for the navy, for the professions, for civil offices, it is a dispute *de lanâ caprinâ*, in my poor opinion; at least on the part of those who oppose it. In the first place, this admission to office, and this exclusion from Parliament, on the principle of an exclusion from political power, is the very reverse of the principle of the English test act. If I were to form a judgment from experience rather than theory, I should doubt much whether the capacity for, or even the possession of, a seat in Parliament, did really convey much of power to be properly called political. I have sat there, with some observation, for nine and twenty years, or thereabouts. The power of a Member of Parliament is uncertain and indirect: and if power rather than splendour and fame were the object, I should think that any of the principal clerks in office (to say nothing of their superiors, several of whom are disqualified by law for seats in Parliament) possess far more power than nine-tenths of the members of the House of Commons. I might say this of men, who seemed from their fortunes, their weight in their country, and their talents, to be persons of figure there; and persons too not in opposition to the prevailing party in government.

"But be they what they will, on a fair canvass of the several prevailing parliamentary interests in Ireland, I cannot, out of the three hundred members, of whom the Irish Parliament is composed, discover, that above three, or at the utmost four, Catholics would be returned to the House of Commons. But suppose they should amount to thirty, that is to a tenth part, (a thing I hold impossible for a long series of years, and never very likely to happen), what is this to those, who are to balance them in the one House, and the clear and settled majority in the other? For I think it absolutely impossible that, in the course of many years, above four or five peers should be created of that communion. In fact, the exclusion of them seems to be the only way to mark jealousy and suspicion, and not to provide security in any way."

The measures now contemplated to benefit Ireland by the new Lord Lieutenant Earl Fitzwilliam, being disapproved by the English ministry, the disagreement unhappily terminated in his recal, and the ferment occasioned by this impolitic act was terminated only by the rebellion. Heated discussions were in the mean time carried on in Dublin in public assemblages of the Catholics and Anti-Catholics, the former in Francis-street, the latter in College Green: a debate on the subject had likewise taken place in the House of Commons. In this situation Mr. Burke wrote his *Second Letter to Sir Hercules Langrishe,* who had sent him his speech on that occasion, and he urges several new arguments to support the view of it, which he and his friend the baronet had taken. His feelings on the change in the Irish administration were of the most desponding nature, and more so in private conversation than he thought proper to publish.——

"I really thought that in the total of the late circumstances with regard to persons, to things, to principles, and to measures, was to be found a conjuncture favourable to the introduction and to the perpetuation of a general harmony, producing a general strength, which to that hour Ireland was never so happy as to enjoy. My sanguine hopes are blasted, and I must consign my feelings on that terrible disappointment to the same patience in which I have been obliged to bury the vexation I suffered on the defeat of the other great, just, and honourable causes, in which I have had some share; and which have given more of dignity than of peace and advantage to a long and laborious life."

Immediately after this letter had been dispatched to its destination, he thought it necessary to defend himself from an attack of the Duke of Norfolk in the House of Lords, who in the debate concerning Earl Fitzwilliam, took occasion to advert to him as the cause of that nobleman's secession from the party. The number, variety, and magnitude of Mr. Burke's talents, he said, were known, and he fully admitted them all, but they had not been put to a right use: by the book which he had published he had provoked dangerous replies, particularly that of Mr. Paine; yet he continued to wage war against Whig principles, and against the spirit and the securities of freedom.

The answer, which is couched in a strain of sarcastic humour, forms a *Letter to William Elliot,* *Esq.* He confesses he is somewhat obstinate in adhering to the opinions and party with which he set out in life, instead of being lectured into the new opinions of a new party, some of whom were not born into the world, and all of them were children, when he entered into the connexion—that he continues somewhat purblind to the blessings of French freedom, and must persevere in the path he had chosen, that is, to try to save his Grace, and persons like his Grace, from themselves—" I admit, indeed, that my praises of the British government, loaded with all its incumbrances; clogged with its peers and its beef; its parsons and its pudding; its commons and its beer, and its dull slavish liberty of going about just as one pleases, had something to provoke a jockey of Norfolk, who was inspired with the resolute ambition of becoming a citizen of France."

Adverting to the toasts, witticisms, and allusions frequently made to him by the political clubs and associations of the day, as well as in the speeches of Mr. Erskine, in the late trials for high treason and on other occasions at the bar, he gives the reins to his peculiar fancy.

" Mr. Erskine supplied something, I allow, from the stores of his imagination, in metamorphosing the jovial toasts of clubs, into solemn special arguments at the bar. So far the thing showed talent: however I must still prefer the bar of the tavern to the other bar. The toasts at the first hand were better than the arguments at the second. Even when the toasts began to grow old as sarcasms, they were washed down with still older pricked election port;

then the acid of the wine made some amends for the want of any thing piquant in the wit. But when his Grace gave them a second transformation, and brought out the vapid stuff, which had wearied the clubs and disgusted the courts; the drug, made up of the bottoms of rejected bottles, all smelling so wofully of the cork and the cask, and of every thing except the honest old lamp, and when that sad draught had been farther infected with the gaol pollution of the Old Bailey, and was dashed and brewed, and ineffectually stunned again into a senatorial exordium in the House of Lords, I found all the high flavour and mantling of my honours, tasteless, flat, and stale. Unluckily, the new tax on wine is felt even in the greatest fortunes, and his Grace submits to take up with the heel-taps of Mr. Erskine."

Touching sarcastically on the inexperience of many of the juvenile politicans of the day, who would fain teach him what true whiggism, freedom, and constitutional principles were; and on the substantial knowledge of such persons as the Duke, in certain *practices* no doubt equally constitutional, he says—

"I give due credit to the censorial brow, to the broad phylacteries, and to the imposing gravity of these magisterial rabbins and doctors in the cabala of political science. I admit that 'wisdom is as the grey hair to man, and that learning is like honorable old age.' But, at a time when liberty is a good deal talked of, perhaps I might be excused, if I caught something of the general indocility. It might not be surprising, if I lengthened my chain a link or two, and in an age of relaxed discipline, gave a trifling indulgence to my own notions. If that could be allowed, perhaps I might sometimes (by accident, and without an unpardonable crime) trust as much to my own very careful and very laborious, though, perhaps, somewhat purblind disquisitions, as to their soaring, intuitive, eagle-eyed authority; but the modern liberty is a precious thing. It must not be profaned by too vulgar an use. It belongs only to the chosen few, who are born to the hereditary representation of the whole democracy, and who leave nothing at all, no, not the offal, to us poor outcasts of the plebeian race.

"Amongst those gentlemen who came to authority, as soon, or sooner than they came of age, I do not mean to include his Grace. With all those native titles to empire over our minds which distinguish the others, he has a large share of experience. He certainly ought to understand the British Constitution better than I do. He has studied it in the fundamental part. For one election I have seen, he has been concerned in twenty. Nobody is less of a visionary theorist; nobody has drawn his speculations more from practice. No peer has condescended to superintend with more vigilance the declining franchises of the poor Commons. 'With thrice great Hermes he has outwatched the bear.' Often have his candles been burned to the snuff, and glimmered and stunk in the sockets, whilst he grew pale at his constitutional duties; long sleepless nights has he wasted; long, laborious, shiftless journies has he made, and great sums has he expended, in order to secure the purity, the independance, and the sobriety of elections, and to give a check, if possible, to the ruinous charges that go nearly to the destruction of the right of election itself.

"Amidst these his labours, his Grace will be pleased to forgive me, if my zeal, less enlightened to be sure than his by midnight lamps and studies, has presumed to talk too favourably of this Constitution, and even to say something sounding like approbation of that body, which has the honour to reckon his Grace at the head of it. Those who dislike this partiality, or, if his Grace pleases, this flattery of mine, have a comfort at hand. I may be refuted and brought to shame by the most convincing of all refutations, a practical refutation. Every individual peer for himself may show, that I was ridiculously wrong; the whole body of those noble persons may refute me for the whole corps. If they please, they are more powerful advocates against themselves, than a thousand scribblers like me can be in their favour. If I were even possessed of those powers which his Grace, in order to heighten my offence, is pleased to attribute to me, there would be little difference. The eloquence of Mr. Erskine might save Mr. ——— from the gallows, but no eloquence could save Mr. Jackson* from the effects of his own potion."

Remembering the influence which he exerted over the public mind, on nearly all the great questions in which he took a leading part, and most of all on the French Revolution, the idea thrown out in the following sketch applies to no man so much as to himself.

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* The clergyman, who being apprehended on a treasonable mission to Ireland, tried and convicted, poisoned himself in prison.

"How often has public calamity been arrested on the very brink of ruin by the seasonable energy of a single man! Have we no such man amongst us? I am as sure as I am of my being, that one vigorous mind without office, without situation, without public functions of any kind (at a time when the want of such a thing is felt as I am sure it is), I say one such man confiding in the aid of God, and full of just reliance on his own fortitude, vigour, enterprise and perseverance, would first draw to him some few like himself, and then that multitudes hardly thought to be in existence would appear and troop about him.

"If I saw this auspicious beginning, baffled and frustrated as I am, yet on the very verge of a timely grave, abandoned abroad, and desolate at home, stripped of my boast, my hope, my consolation, my helper, my counsellor, and my guide,* yet thus, even thus, I would rake up the fire under all the ashes that oppress it. I am no longer patient of the public eye; nor am I of force to win my way, and to justle and elbow in a crowd. But even in solitude something may be done for society. The meditations of the closet have infected senates with a subtle frenzy, and inflamed armies with the brands of the furies. The cure might come from the same source as the distemper. I would add my part to those who would animate the people (whose hearts are yet right) to new exertions in the old cause."

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* His son.

About this time he had to lament another severe family affliction in the death of Major Haviland, the husband of his niece, who having accompanied his regiment, the 45th, to the West Indies (from a sense of duty, though contrary to the wishes of his family), died at Martinique, just as he was gazetted a colonel. Mrs. Haviland, who remained at home, received the melancholy intelligence of being a widow shortly before she became a mother. To this sad event the following letters of Mr. Burke, addressed with two exceptions to the senior Mrs. Haviland, chiefly relate.

"My dearest Madam,

"You know that I partake from the very bottom of my soul the affliction you suffer. It is not my relation to him, and through him to you that alone affects me. I loved him as a friend, and I loved you as a friend, both of you most sincerely, before we had any other connexion: but sorrow and suffering are our lot; and the same God who makes the dispensation, must be our comfort under it.

"As to the excellent poor creature here who approaches to her time very nearly, we cannot possibly trust her with what I fear too much is the real state of her case. She is far advanced, and if she hears it before she gets to town and has help at hand, I think it may be death to her, so we thank you most cordially for the cold.* She was dressed;

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* An excuse made by Mrs. Haviland, to avoid an interview with her daughter-in-law, just after the news of her loss had arrived.

and nothing else could hinder her going to you. May the Almighty strengthen us all, and bow us in this and in all things to his wise disposal. May every blessing attend you. Adieu, and believe me ever faithfully and affectionately yours, and Mrs. Aston's sincere friend and obliged humble servant,

"EDMUND BURKE.

"Mrs. Burke is to you both with all her usual affection."

"TO OLIVER DOLPHIN, ESQ. LOUGHREA, IRELAND.

"MY DEAR SIR,

"Your humanity cannot fail to be affected with the subject on which I take the liberty to write. Our unhappy family furnishes little else than disasters to ourselves, and subjects of grief to those who are compassionate enough to be our friends. The poor object of your protection, my niece Mary Haviland, could hardly call herself a wife when she became a widow. Major Haviland, who had been just appointed a colonel, died before his appointment could reach him in the West Indies; she is within a few weeks of her lying-in, and as yet I have not informed her of her unhappy fate. I tremble to do it from the effect it may have upon her in her present state, but we cannot conceal it above a day longer at the utmost. I am bound to apprise you of every thing concerning her, who have ever taken so kind and paternal an interest in this friendless and excellent creature.

"You have protected her as an orphan; I now must owe to you the same care of her affairs as a widow. Mrs. Burke has brought her to town that in case she should be suddenly taken ill by this news, she may have help from the physicians, on whom above all others our poor Mary has the greatest reliance. Your son, one of the finest young men, and the most promising for parts and morals that I know, did us the favour of affording a day at our house before his departure for the sea coast.

"I am ever, with sincere respect and affection,
"My dear Sir,
"Your most faithful and obedient servant,
"Edmund Burke.

"London, August 5, 1795.

"I shall return to the country in a day or two, whither you will be pleased to direct to me."

(No date, but about 7th or 8th of August, 1795.)

"My dear Mrs. Haviland,

"I waited to see how things turned out with your poor child before I troubled you on the subject. A melancholy one it is to us all. She was not made acquainted with her irreparable loss until yesterday morning. She had from our manner been prepared to expect bad news of some kind or other; and the unfortunate business was opened so gradually that though grief beyond expression was caused by it (a thing inevitable in a case of so heavy a loss falling on so much sensibility) yet there was nothing of surprise. An agony of sorrow continued the whole day; and her night was not good. Dr. Poinan, in whom she has much confidence, has seen her since, and he had been previously consulted. He was of opinion that the communication might be more safely made to her before her lying in, than after or very near the time. It was impossible to conceal it, even had it been advisable so to do, for many days longer. He is not apprehensive of danger in the least degree.

"I have been in town the whole day almost to this minute; since my return, I have been at her lodgings, where she is likely to be quiet. The air is good, and the family kind and attentive. Mrs. Burke feels for you with a most tender and cordial sympathy; as I do very truly as much as an old heart worn out with incurable affliction can do. I am, with my best love to Mrs. Aston,

"My dear Madam,
"Your affectionate, old, miserable friend,
"Newington, Thursday. "EDMUND BURKE."

The following is to his niece, written some short time after the birth of her son.

"September 4, 1795.

"MY DEAR LITTLE MARY,

"Your aunt goes to London to see you. I cannot attend her,* else you may be sure I should have great comfort in seeing you and your little one. But I cannot let her go without telling you that I love you very dearly; and that it is my earnest prayer to Almighty God that you may live long and happily; and that you may see your son † a support to your old age; an honour and satisfaction to you, and an useful man to his friends and country; and that at a very long day *he* may close *your* eyes, not as I have done those of your admirable cousin. Adieu, my dear child! my most cordial congratulations.

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* The cause was a visit to Mr. Burke, from some members of the royal family of France:—the present King, and the Dukes de Berri and D'Angoulême.

† The present Mr. Thomas Haviland Burke.

" Believe me, most affectionately yours,
" EDMUND BURKE."

The following adverts to a pecuniary offer made at this period by Mrs. Haviland, when aware that her friend was suffering under some temporary difficulty; it was, however, declined, and returned to her in this note.

" MY DEAR MADAM,

" We think this *too much* at any time; *now,* we will not take it; on your return we will think of it; we do not refuse but postpone it, for as I know pretty nearly how two things stand, we do not at this time want it; when we do, I assure you solemnly and sincerely we will call for it. We shall write to you from Bath.

" I am ever to you and our dear Nabby,
" Your most faithful and affectionate friend,
" JANE BURKE AND
" E. BURKE.
" Sunday."

The following is of a subsequent date, by some months.

" MY DEAR MADAM,

" Mrs. Burke and I have just heard through their usual kind attentions, of the arrival of our worthy physician and friends of Bath, at the metropolis of this district. A thousand thanks to you and to them, there and here. Most unfortunately to me I am obliged to be in London to-morrow. But if you and they will suffer Mrs. Burke to represent me you will dine here with those gentlemen to-morrow (Sunday); and if the continuance of the good weather should tempt them to remain in this pleasant country, I shall, please God, be back on Tuesday evening, and shall have the satisfaction of engaging you and them for that day also. All the ladies here kiss your and Mrs. Aston's hands. They must not talk of kissing the gentlemen,—no, not the younger Mr. Fitzherbert,* though I know they long for it.

"Ever yours,

"Saturday. "EDMUND BURKE."

Toward the end of the month of October (28th), Mr. Burke received a polite note from Lord Auckland, dated from Eden Farm, Kent, saying that "though in the stormy ocean of the last twenty-three years they had seldom sailed on the same tack, there had been nothing hostile in their signals or manœuvres, and on his part at least a strong disposition toward friendly and respectful sentiments. Under a similar influence now he begged leave to send him a small work which exhibited his fair and full opinions on the arduous circumstances of the moment."

The reply, sent to his lordship two days afterward, wholly dissents from his views as exhibited in this work, and expresses that dissent in the strongest terms he can use. The first paragraph, it will be observed, displays that desponding and occasionally querulous tone which he assumed when subdued by private grief, or by the contemplation of further public calamity from the ill success of our own and the arms of our allies against republican France on the Continent, where, above all other places, he urged, success was most to be desired. "Buried in the anticipated grave of a feeble old age, forgetting and forgotten," must therefore be taken as words of course. They could not, with any truth, be applied to himself, whose mental energies were constantly acting through the press in as strong and as bright a manner as they ever were; whose doctrines were constantly in discussion; whose name was daily bandied about in every form of publication from the newspaper to the quarto, a theme of alternate praise and censure, even much more than most of the ministers of the country; and from whose thoughts public topics were never for any length of time absent.—

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* A near relative of Mrs. Haviland.

"My dear Lord,

"I am perfectly sensible of the very flattering honour you have done me in turning any part of your attention towards a dejected old man, buried in the anticipated grave of a feeble old age, forgetting and forgotten in an obscure and melancholy retreat.

"In this retreat I have nothing relative to this world to do but to study all the tranquillity that in the state of my mind I am capable of. To that end

I find it but too necessary to call to my aid an oblivion of most of the circumstances pleasant and unpleasant of my life; to think as little, and indeed to know as little as I can of every thing that is doing about me; and, above all, to divert my mind from all presagings and prognostications of what I must (if I let my speculations loose) consider as of absolute necessity to happen after my death, and possibly even before it. Your address to the public which you have been so good as to send to me, obliges me to break in upon that plan, and to look a little on what is behind, and very much on what is before me. It creates in my mind a variety of thoughts, and all of them unpleasant.

"It is true, my Lord, what you say, that through our public life, we have generally sailed on somewhat different tacks. We have so undoubtedly, and we should do so still, if I had continued longer to keep the sea. In that difference you rightly observe that I have always done justice to your skill and ability as a navigator, and to your good intentions towards the safety of the cargo and of the ship's company. I cannot say now that we are on different tacks. There would be no propriety in the metaphor. I can sail no longer. My vessel cannot be said to be even in port. She is wholly condemned and broken up. To have an idea of that vessel you must call to mind what you have often seen on the Kentish road. Those planks of tough and hardy oak that used for years to brave the buffets of the Bay of Biscay, are now turned with their warped grain and empty trunnion holes into very wretched pales for the enclosure of a wretched farm-yard.

" The style of your pamphlet, and the eloquence and power of composition you display in it, are such as do great honour to your talents; and in conveying any other sentiments would give me very great pleasure. Perhaps I do not very perfectly comprehend your purpose, and the drift of your arguments. If I do not—pray do not attribute my mistake to want of candour, but to want of sagacity. I confess your address to the public, together with other accompanying circumstances, has filled me with a degree of grief and dismay which I cannot find words to express. If the plan of politics there recommended, pray excuse my freedom, should be adopted by the King's Councils and by the good people of this kingdom (as so recommended undoubtedly it will) nothing can be the consequence but utter and irretrievable ruin to the Ministry, to the Crown, to the succession, to the importance, to the independence, to the very existence of this country.

" This is my feeble perhaps, but clear, positive, decided, long and maturely-reflected, and frequently declared opinion, from which all the events which have lately come to pass, so far from turning me, have tended to confirm beyond the power of alteration, even by your eloquence and authority. I find, my dear Lord, that you think some persons who are not satisfied with the securities of a Jacobin peace, to be persons of intemperate minds. I may be, and I fear I am with you in that description: but pray, my Lord, recollect that very few of the causes which make men intemperate, can operate upon me. Sanguine hopes, vehement desires, inordinate ambition, implacable animosity, party attachments, or party interests; all these with me have no existence. For myself or for a family (alas! I have none), I have nothing to hope or to fear in this world. I am attached by principle, inclination, and gratitude to the King, and to the present Ministry.

"Perhaps you may think that my animosity to Opposition is the cause of my dissent on seeing the politics of Mr. Fox (which while I was in the world I combated by every instrument which God had put into my hands, and in every situation in which I had taken part), so completely adopted in your Lordship's book: but it was with pain I broke with that great man for ever in that cause—and I assure you, it is not without pain that I differ with your Lordship on the same principles. But it is of no concern. I am far below the region of those great and tempestuous passions. I feel nothing of the intemperance of mind. It is rather sorrow and dejection than anger.

"Once more my best thanks for your very polite attention, and do me the favour to believe me with the most perfect sentiments of respect and regard,

"My dear Lord,
"Your Lordship's
"Most obedient and humble servant,
"Beaconsfield, Oct. 30, 1795. "E. BURKE."

The work thus sent and acknowledged was a pamphlet intended to be published in London on the same day, under the title of "*Remarks on the Apparent Circumstances of the War in the Fourth Week of October*, 1795." Its main purpose was to insinuate, for nothing was distinctly recommended, the propriety of peace with France—that the thing was desirable and the moment favourable; both which propositions are refuted by his correspondent with much sarcastic humour and vigour of reasoning in the "*Fourth Letter on a Regicide Peace,*" addressed to Earl Fitzwilliam, which though published only in his posthumous works, was the first of the series begun on that subject. Lord Auckland, therefore, has the merit, indirectly, of having been the occasion of writing these able essays; their opinions, it will be observed, were nearly as opposite as they had been on the American war; and on both subjects it will not require much deliberation to decide to whom is to be given the award of superior sagacity.—

"A piece has been sent to me," he says in the letter just mentioned, "called 'Remarks on the apparent Circumstances of the War in the Fourth Week of October, 1795,' with a French motto—*Que faire encore une fois dans une telle nuit?—Attendre le jour.* The very title seemed to me striking and peculiar, and to announce something uncommon.

"In the time I have lived to, I always seem to walk on enchanted ground. Every thing is new, and, according to the fashionable phrase, revolutionary. In the former days authors valued themselves upon the maturity and fulness of their deliberations. Accordingly they predicted (perhaps with more arrogance than reason) an eternal duration to their works. The quite contrary is our present fashion. Writers value themselves now on the instability of their opinions, and the transitory life of their productions. On this kind of credit the modern institutors open their schools. They write for youth, and it is sufficient if the instruction 'lasts as long as a present love,'—or as 'the painted silks and cottons of the season.'

"The doctrines in this work are applied, for their standard, with great exactness to the shortest possible periods both of conception and duration. The title is, "Some Remarks on the apparent Circumstances of the War in the Fourth Week of October, 1795.' The time is critically chosen. A month or so earlier would have made it the anniversary of a bloody Parisian September, when the French massacre one another. A day or two later would have carried it into a London November, the gloomy month, in which it is said by a pleasant author that Englishmen hang and drown themselves. In truth, this work has a tendency to alarm us with symptoms of public suicide. However, there is one comfort to be taken even from the gloomy time of year. It is a rotting season. If what is brought to market is not good, it is not likely to keep long. Even buildings run up in haste with untempered mortar in that humid weather, if they are ill-contrived tenements, do not threaten long to encumber the earth.

"The author tells us (and I believe he is the very first author that ever told such a thing to his readers) 'that the *entire fabric* of his speculations might be overset by unforeseen vicissitudes;' and what is far more extraordinary, 'that even the *whole* consideration might be *varied whilst he was writing those pages*.' Truly, in my poor judgment, this circumstance formed a very substantial motive for his not publishing those ill-considered considerations at all. He ought to have followed the good advice of his motto, *Que faire encore dans une telle nuit?—Attendre le jour.* He ought to have waited till he had got a little more day-light on this subject. Night itself is hardly darker than the fogs of that time.

"Finding the *last week* in October so particularly referred to, and not perceiving any particular event relative to the war, which happened on any of the days in that week, I thought it possible that they were marked by some astrological superstition, to which the greatest politicians have been subject. I therefore had recourse to my Rider's Almanac. There I found indeed something that characterized the work, and that gave directions concerning the sudden political and natural variations, and for eschewing the maladies, that are most prevalent in that aguish intermittent season, 'the last week of October.' On that week the sagacious astrologer, Rider, in his note on the third column of the calendar side, teaches us to expect '*variable and cold weather;*' but instead of encouraging us to trust ourselves to the haze and mist, and doubtful lights of that changeable week, on the answerable part of the opposite page, he gives us a salutary caution (indeed it is very nearly in the words of the author's motto): '*Avoid* (says he) *being out late at night, and in foggy weather, for a cold now caught may last the whole winter.*' This ingenious author, who disdained the prudence of the almanac, walked out in the very fog he complains of, and has led us to a very unseasonable airing at that time. Whilst this noble writer, by the vigour of an excellent constitution, formed for the violent changes he prognosticates, may shake off the importunate rheum and malignant influenza of this disagreeable week, a whole Parliament may go on spitting and snivelling, and wheezing and coughing, during a whole session. All this from listening to variable, hebdomadal politicians, who run away from their opinions without giving us a month's warning; and for not listening to the wise and friendly admonitions of Dr. Cardamus Rider, who never apprehends he may change his opinions before his pen is out of his hand, but always enables us to lay in, at least, a year's stock of useful information.

"At first I took comfort. I said to myself, that if I should, as I fear I must, oppose the doctrines *of the last week of October*, it is probable, that, by this time, they are no longer those of the eminent writer to whom they are attributed. He gives us hopes, that long before this he may have embraced the direct contrary sentiments. If I am found in a conflict with those of the last week of October, I may be in full agreement with those of the last week in December, or in the first week of January, 1796. But a second edition, and a French translation (for the benefit, I must suppose, of the new Regicide Directory) have let down a little of these flattering hopes. We and the Directory know that the author, whatever changes his works seemed made to indicate, like a weather-cock grown rusty, remains just where he was in the last week of last October. It is true, that his protest against binding him to his opinions, and his reservation of a right to whatever opinions he pleases, remain in their full force.

This variability is pleasant, and shows a fertility of fancy;

"Yet, doing all justice to the sportive variability of these weekly, daily, or hourly speculators, shall I be pardoned, if I attempt a word on the part of us simple country folk? It is not good for *us*, however it may be so for great statesmen, that we should be treated with variable politics. I consider different relations as prescribing a different conduct. I allow that, in transactions with an enemy, a Minister may, and often must, vary his demands with the day, and possibly with the hour. With an enemy, a fixed plan, variable arrangements. This is the rule the nature of the transaction prescribes.

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"Such is the spirit of the proceedings in the doubtful and transitory state of things between enmity and friendship. In this change the subjects of the transformation are by nature carefully wrapped up in their coccoons. The gay ornament of summer is not seemly in his aurelia state. This mutability is allowed to a foreign negociator; but when a great politician condescends publicly to instruct his own countrymen on a matter which may fix their fate for ever, his opinions ought not to be diurnal, or even weekly. These ephemerides of politics are not made for our slow and coarse understandings. Our appetite demands *a piece of resistance.* We require some food that will stick to the ribs. We call for sentiments to which we can attach ourselves; sentiments in which we can take an interest; sentiments on which we can warm, on which we can ground some confidence in ourselves or in others. We do not want a largess of inconstancy. Poor souls, we have enough of that sort of poverty at home. There is a difference too between deliberation and doctrine.: a man ought to be decided in his opinions before he attempts to teach. His fugitive lights may serve himself in some unknown region, but they cannot free us from the effects of the error into which we have been betrayed. His active Will-o'-the-Wisp may be gone, nobody can guess whither, whilst he leaves us bemired and benighted in the bog."

It was about this time that his ingenious friend Mr. Smith, who had distinguished himself in the Irish House of Commons by a speech in favour of Roman Catholic emancipation in the spirit of the advice of his great correspondent, printed and sent it to him. There is something at once very affecting and eloquent in the first paragraph of the reply of Burke; it alludes of course to the loss of his son.—

"My dear Sir,

"I could not without ingratitude defer my acknowledgments of your letter, which breathes the very spirit of sympathy and condolence. Others have offered me comfort, but not of a kind that I could accept. You alone have touched the chord to which my feelings vibrate; and touched it the more soothingly because you have touched it sadly.—Yes;—the life which has been so embittered cannot long endure.—The grave will soon close over me and my dejections.—But I will not make so ill a return for your kindness as to overcast your young mind with the gloom that covers mine.

" I have read your speech with the greatest satisfaction. Yet I am assured by some who heard you, that it is not done justice to in the report. Be this as it may, take my word for it you will never live to repent of the vote which you have given, or to blush for the arguments with which you have supported your opinion. They are free from all the jacobinic impurity of our day; and drawn from the pure and genuine sources of the constitution. The allusion with which you open to what had been said by a member who preceded you in the debate is a very happy one; and gives a spirited air of *impromptu* to the entire speech. It seems to show that though your general topics might have been revolved, your ideas were allowed to arrange and clothe themselves on the spot. *Lucan* had little notion that he was expressing a great political and moral truth, when he wrote that line of which you have made so felicitous a use.* You had already apprized me that you were a Christ Church man; but I must give you credit for having turned this fact to so good and argumentative a purpose.

" In tracing any of your reasoning to me, as having supplied its source, you do me an honour which I might be proud of, but which I can scarcely claim. Unless in a passage in which you suggest that the half citizen might become whole Jacobin, I meet with no argument which recals any thing that I had written to my mind. I have about as much share in the merits of your speech as the bell-ringer had in the merits of the sermon to which he had been summoning a congregation. What assistance you may have received from your good father, to whom I beg to offer my respects, I cannot say. I am aware that you are treading in his political footsteps; and I congratulate *you* on having such a pattern; and *him* on having such an imitator.

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* ——— *imagur tellus*
Stat quia summa fugit.

Used for the purpose of showing that superficial change may produce fundamental stability.

"Pardon the length of this letter. I little thought when I began it that I should have an apology of this kind to offer.—Adieu!

"Your's, &c. &c.

"EDMUND BURKE.

"To Wm. Smith, Esq."

Considerable distress arising about this time from the dearness of provisions, and many remedial schemes being in consequence proposed for the adoption of government, he collected and addressed to Mr. Pitt in November of this year, "Thoughts and Details on Scarcity." In this tract are expounded, in an intelligible manner, some of the doctrines of political economists bearing upon agriculture as a trade. He adverts likewise to the absurdity of some of the schemes proposed to be carried into effect, such as settling a maximum of prices, regulating the wages of labour between farmer and servant by authority, and establishing public granaries in towns by government to supply the wants of the people at a fixed price. To those who are most clamorous in a dear season, he puts the argument thus—

"The cry of the people in cities and towns, though unfortunately from a fear of their multitude and combination, the most regarded, ought in fact to be the least attended to on this subject; for citizens are in a state of utter ignorance of the means by which they are to be fed, and they contribute little or nothing, except in an infinitely circuitous manner, to their own maintenance. They are "*Fruges consumere nati.*" They are to be heard with great respect and attention upon matters within their province, that is, on trades and manufactures; but on any thing that relates to agriculture, they are to be listened to with the same reverence which we pay to the dogmas of other ignorant and presumptuous men.

"If any one were to tell them, that they were to give in an account of all the stock in their shops; that attempts would be made to limit their profits, or raise the price of the labouring manufacturers upon them; or recommend to government, out of a capital from the public revenues, to set up a shop of the same commodities in order to rival them and keep them to reasonable dealing, they would very soon see the impudence, injustice, and oppression of such a course. They would not be mistaken; but they are of opinion that agriculture is to be subject to other laws, and to be governed by other principles.

"A greater and more ruinous mistake cannot be fallen into than that the trades of agriculture and grazing can be conducted upon any other than the common principles of commerce; namely, that the producer should be permitted and even expected to look to all possible profit, which without fraud or violence he can make; to turn plenty or scarcity to the best advantage he can; to keep back or to bring forward his commodities at pleasure; to account to no one for his stock or for his gain. On any other terms he is the slave of the consumer; and that he should be so is of no benefit to the consumer."

On the general principle of legislative interference on such matters, particularly in seasons of scarcity, he says—

"In that state of affairs and of the public with relation to them, the first thing that government owes to us, the people, is *information;* the next is timely coercion;—the one to guide our judgment, the other to regulate our tempers.

"To provide for us in our necessities is not in the power of government. It would be a vain presumption in statesmen to think they can do it. The people maintain them, and not they the people. It is in the power of government to prevent much evil; it can do very little positive good in this or perhaps in any thing else. It is not only so of the state and statesman, but of all the classes and descriptions of the rich—they are the pensioners of the poor, and are maintained by their superfluity. They are under an absolute, hereditary, and indefeasible dependence on those who labour and are miscalled the poor.

"The labouring people are only poor because they are numerous. Numbers in their nature imply poverty. In a fair distribution among a vast multitude none can have much. That class of dependent pensioners called the rich is so extremely small, that if all their throats were cut, and a distribution made of all they consume in a year, it would not give a bit of bread and cheese for one night's supper to those who labour, and who in reality feed both the pensioners and themselves.

" But the throats of the rich ought not to be cut, nor their magazines plundered; because in their persons they are trustees for those who labour, and their hoards are the banking-houses of these latter. Whether they mean it or not, they do in effect execute their trust—some with more, some with less fidelity and judgment. But on the whole, the duty is performed and every thing returns, deducting some very trifling commission and discount, to the place from whence it arose. When the poor rise to destroy the rich, they act as wisely for their own purposes as when they burn mills and throw corn into the river, to make cheap bread."

Adverting to the impolicy of stopping the distillery from an idea of its affecting the price of corn, when in reality it was damaged corn unfit for bread, and the very lowest quality of barley and malt that were used for the purpose, he considers the spirit as " clear gain to the nation," and its loss as a serious deduction from the articles of revenue and trade. The half-jocular apology for its use exhibits the same just appreciation of the habits and wants of mankind in opposition to the inconsiderate condemnation of common-place moralists and philosophers—

" As to what is said in a physical and moral view against the home consumption of spirits, experience has long since taught me very little to respect the declamations on that subject—Whether the thunder of the laws, or the thunder of eloquence ‘ be hurled on gin,’ always I am thunder proof. The alembic in my mind has furnished the world a far greater benefit and blessing, than if the *opus maximum* had been really found by chemistry, and like *Midas,* we could turn every thing into gold.”

Having attended to him on this topic as an economist and moralist, let us hear him conclude it as a *physician;* there are few perhaps who will not coincide in opinions so well sustained by facts.

“ Undoubtedly there may be a dangerous abuse in the excess of spirits; and at one time I am ready to believe the abuse was great. When spirits are cheap, the business of drunkenness is achieved with little time or labour, but that evil I consider to be nearly done away. Observation for the last forty years, and very particularly for the last thirty, has furnished me with ten instances of drunkenness from other causes, for one from this. Ardent spirit is a great medicine, often to remove distempers—much more frequently to prevent them, or to chase them away in their beginnings. It is not nutritive *in any great* degree. But if not food, it greatly alleviates the want of it. It invigorates the stomach for the digestion of poor meagre diet not easily alliable to the human constitution. Wine the poor cannot touch; beer, as applied to many occasions (as among seamen and fishermen for instance) will by no means do the business. Let me add, what wits inspired with champaign and claret will turn into ridicule—it is medicine for the mind. Under the pressure of the cares and sorrows of our mortal condition, men have at all times and in all countries, called in some physical aid to their moral consolations—wine, beer, opium, brandy, or tobacco."

Few things, it has been often remarked, escaped the comprehensive range of his observation; nothing indeed which more particularly concerned the well-being, the necessities, the business, or the desires of men generally, or those more immediately around him. His knowledge of farming, and of stock live and dead, was so highly estimated by his neighbours as to occasion frequent applications for advice upon such matters. He surprised a distinguished literary and political character who about this time paid him a visit, by entering into a history of rural affairs, of the rents, taxes, the variations in the poor's rates of fifty parishes in the county during several consecutive years, and the improvements adopted by the neighbourhood in tillage and grazing, with the fulness of a farmer who had little else to attend to, though it might be supposed that the meditation and contention attendant on a most active public life, had left little time for acquiring and retaining such details.

The "Thoughts on Scarcity" he had at one time determined to enlarge by the introduction of much more of the same kind of facts, furnished from his own observation, and to re-model and publish them under the title of "Letters on Rural Œconomics, addressed to Mr. Arthur Young." The work was even advertized, but the more urgent claims of politics probably caused it to be at first deferred and finally relinquished. Few could have given to such a subject a more popular form, or perhaps more real knowledge, as his letters to his cousin Mr. Garret

Nagle, which relate chiefly to rural matters, display. In the beginning of this very summer also he had, from the appearance of the young wheat, predicted an insufficient harvest; but finding little credence given to his prognostics in the country, he carried a large quantity of young wheat ears in his carriage to exhibit to his agricultural friends in town, who proved nearly as incredulous, until the result fully evinced his penetration. Harvest-home was always celebrated at Butler's Court with abundant hospitality, the family mingling in the gaiety and sports of the time without reserve, and vying in attention to their humble guests.

Several plans for bettering the condition of the poor in the neighbourhood originated at his suggestion. Among these, as likely to promote a spirit of honest independence which formed a kind of pledge for the existence of other good qualities, he recommended institutions for mutual support in cases of age and infirmity, in the nature of benefit societies, which were then, and are still, much less common among the rural population than in towns. Of one of these he became a patron and member, subscribed to it as a poor man would do, attended its meetings, visited those who claimed relief, and usually took the opportunity of inculcating sentiments of piety, loyalty, order and industry among its members. Seventy of the brethren of this society clad in mourning attended him to the grave.

"In 1795 and 1796," writes a gentleman of the neighbourhood to the author of this work, "corn became much increased in price, and the poor felt the pressure severely. Mr. Burke, who was ever feelingly alive to their wants, and never backward in exerting himself to afford relief, had a windmill in the park at Butler's Court, in which he directed good corn to be ground, made it into bread at his own house, and retailed it to the poor at a very reduced price. This he said was a better plan than merely to make them a present of it. The bread was of course unadulterated and excellent. He had it served at his own table. I partook of it there; and he requested me to take a loaf to Wycombe in order to show to the more opulent people in that town and in the vicinity, how much might be done, and with comparatively little trouble, for the benefit of the community."

With the poor in his neighbourhood he was generally a favourite, having the address to converse much with them, visit their cottages, overlook or regulate their pastimes as well as their labours, without losing any thing of his dignity. Strolling out at a very late period of his life during the breakfast hour of his people, he found in a corner of one of the fields a lad, the son of one of his superintending men named Rolfe, at his morning's repast, composed of a kind of hodge-podge very common in the county. Mr. Burke tasted and commended it; the boy with some pride of heart replied, that it was not so good as he usually had, but if he would come and taste it at dinner, and see how well his mother made it when "father was there," he would say it was much better. "Well then, my boy, go home and tell your mother that I mean to dine with *you* to day off this favourite dish, at the usual hour." The boy executed his errand, to the no small surprise of his mother, who, however, not doubting the correctness of the message, exerted her very best housewifery upon the occasion; and accordingly "the Master" made his appearance at the appointed time, partook heartily of their humble fare, and expressed himself highly gratified with his *visit.*

He was frequently accustomed upon public occasions, and upon the occurrence of any event gratifying to his private feelings, to treat his labourers and people about him with a cask of strong beer, his directions about which were, when the news was particularly joyous, *to tap it at both ends.* Some time before the death of his son, intelligence was brought to the house, and communicated to the father in a hasty manner, that he had met with a serious accident which endangered his life. The distress which this occasioned may be conceived, until a friend arrived soon afterwards with the pleasing information that he had sustained no bodily harm. "Call up Webster," cried out Mr. Burke in a moment, "tell him to get all the assistance he can to turn the largest moveable cask of strong beer out of the cellar—bring hither the people to partake of it—and be sure to tap it at both ends with the largest gimlet in the house."

It may be doubted whether his antipathy to revolutionary France at this moment did not extend in part to its produce, as the following anecdote, communicated by a gentleman who occasionally visited him, would almost seem to testify.—"Calling at Butler's Court one day in the year 1795, after passing through a drenching shower of rain, Mr. Burke pressed me to take a glass of strong sherry, which he said was of his own importation, and the very best he could procure. 'I cannot,' he added, 'offer you brandy, for I will never pay a guinea per gallon for that or for any other article from that country.' What would he have said had he lived to see brandy forty-eight shillings per gallon?"

"I cannot conceive," writes the same gentleman, "why Mr. Burke should have been suspected of being a Roman Catholic, when there was nothing whatever to countenance such an assertion, except his having some relations of that persuasion, which is a common thing in Ireland, arising from intermarriages; and his advocating their cause in Parliament, and in the press. This stupid prejudice was not, however, confined to the lower class of people, for I once heard a person holding a considerable office under government term him 'a kiln-dried Roman Catholic.' Shortly after this, it so happened that I was invited to dine at Butler's Court. 'You will meet,' said Mr. Burke to me, 'the Bishop of St. Pol de Leon of the Roman Catholic church, and Dr. Walker King, a dignified clergyman of our *more fortunate and purer church*.' The latter part of the sentence was pronounced emphatically, in allusion perhaps to the then unhappy state of the French church and clergy, and the words made a strong impression upon me, as contradicting so strongly the ungenerous imputation I had lately heard.

"At table accordingly I met with the reverend persons he had mentioned, along with several others of the right honourable gentleman's friends. I shall never forget the manner in which he descended the grand flight of stone steps to receive me—the cordial pressure of his hand—and the graceful and dignified demeanour of introducing me to his other guests.

"Burke had a way of doing these little things which struck me as being peculiarly his own, and calculated to make a strong impression on the mind of a stranger. He was particularly attentive in his own house, or at his own table, to any man who was of inferior rank; he would frequently address his conversation to such person in order to overcome any diffidence he might feel, and, as the phrase is, *draw him out* to exhibit any peculiar merit or talent he possessed. His own conversation, in his gayer moments, was various and excursive; he did not dwell long on common matters, but giving you some bright and brilliant thoughts or happy phrases which it seemed difficult to forget, would pass on to some kindred or relative topic, and throw out the coruscations of his wit or imagination upon that also, thus keeping up a kind of intellectual sharp-shooting on every subject that offered.

"It will be supposed there was some effort in this, and it is not improbable; but it was not obvious. His mind, however, seemed to be mostly on the stretch, and few things escaped it. I think it was impossible ever to mistake him for an every-day man; for if in his efforts to sustain his reputation for superiority in private society, he sometimes failed in his hits, and stumbled into, or below, mediocrity, he recovered in a moment his dignity and proper station."

In October, 1795, a grant, though somewhat tardy in its appearance, was at length awarded to his eminent public services in a pension of 1200*l.* per annum on the civil list, and afterwards another of 2500*l.* on the four and a half per cent. fund; neither of them solicited directly or indirectly, but said to have originated in the express wish of the King. The manner in which this bounty came, formed however no object of consideration with the political party to whom he was opposed; the simple fact of receiving it being deemed sufficient to justify pretty strong censures in Parliament, and from the less respectable portion of it out of doors connected with the press, the most rancorous abuse, and the most unjust and ungenerous imputations, which among the same class of persons are occasionally current to the present day.

It was in vain to urge that it was deserved by lengthened and very remarkable public services—by his personal disinterestedness on many occasions—by surrendering about 20,000*l.* per annum as his perquisites from the Pay Office—by his Reform bill, which for twelve years past had saved the country nearly 80,000*l.* annually in hard money, as well as the extinction of a source of what might have been converted to undue influence in Parliament—by the reformation of the Pay Office in guarding against the serious deficits so frequently experienced there, and rendering available to the public service about 1,000,000*l.*, the frequent amount of the balance in hand—and if for nothing else, by his exertions against the revolutionary opinions of the day; which in the general belief warded off the most imminent peril with which the constitution of the country had been threatened since the time of James II. These latter labours, however, so different are political tastes, seemed to constitute his sole offence in the eyes of his former coadjutors and admirers; they had no other charge indeed to allege against him; and the acceptance of the pension was considered as the consummation of the crime. The heat of the moment caused them to forget that a pension is the usual and most open and honourable mode of rewarding great abilities devoted to the advancement of the public good; that if receiving it were a proof of corruption, few of their own friends at that moment but were equally corrupt; and that in fact, tried by this standard of purity, there was scarcely a single honest public name, not excepting Lord Chatham himself, to be found in our annals. Against those effusions of irritation rather than of good sense, good feeling, or sound argument, Mr. Burke had to place a public life of thirty years of unsullied purity, which, in the language of an eminent Whig when alluding to the fact, "was proof against his own embarrassed circumstances."

The effects of clamour and abuse, whether right or wrong, when perseveringly continued, are rarely inconsiderable. Some even of his admirers began to doubt the propriety of his accepting the boon, among whom was the anonymous author of the "Pursuits of Literature," who, though convinced, as he said, that no man ever better, or possibly so well, deserved public reward, seems inclined to think he ought not to have received it, in order to avoid the possibility of imputation upon his motives. This is a refinement of fastidiousness not to be looked for, scarcely to be desired, in the affairs of the world, and which, if attended to, would preclude most public servants from experiencing any thing like public gratitude. If a statesman has honourably earned reward, if it be honourably offered to his acceptance, and if he be, from the nature of his private circumstances, really in want of it, why, it may be asked, should the benefit not be received? Would it not indicate weakness rather than strength of mind to be frighted from it by vulgar abuse, or by waiting to obtain that which never was, and never can be received by any man—universal assent to his deserts? Or is it meant to be maintained that the insignificant in talents, the worthless and inefficient members of the state, or those who are already rich and do not want it, are alone to profit by the public bounty? "The word pension," said Lord Macartney, a statesman of experience and of unspotted integrity even in India, when India was a hot bed of temptation even to sturdy virtue, "gives great offence to some gentlemen; but for my part I have lived too much in the world to suffer myself to be imposed upon by a word or a name. In every other country of Europe, a pension is considered the most honourable recompence which a subject can enjoy—I speak of free countries, such for instance as Sweden.* * * A pension is infinitely more honourable than a sinecure office; the one loudly speaks its meaning, but the other hypocritically lurks under a supposition of duty where there is nothing to do." His Lordship might have added, that though it is the fashion in England to rail against pensions whether well or ill bestowed, most men, when they have the opportunity, find it very convenient to accept them.

The hostility to Mr. Burke on this occasion was carried into the House of Lords by the Duke of Bedford, and the Earl of Lauderdale, though answered by an animated defence from Lord Grenville there, and from Mr. Windham in the House of Commons. Some surprise was expressed that men of such consideration in the country, making every allowance for party feelings, should display so much illiberality toward the defender, perhaps the saviour of that very rank and property which served to elevate them above the mass of mankind, and from an atom of which, notwithstanding the countenance given by them to the new opinions, they would have been extremely loth to part. It seemed ungenerous that this should be done by former associates in political life, by men who had acquiesced in grants to other, though much less distinguished, public men for public services, and who from their position in the state might be supposed to rate at its proper value a long and laborious career, and to estimate those still more intense though unseen and unrewarded labours, which form the toilsome preparative to public eminence.

The attack, however, had the effect of drawing forth the celebrated "Letter to a Noble Lord;" on the whole the most brilliant exhibition of powers perhaps in the whole range of English prose; which on first meeting with, the present writer read over twice (many parts half a dozen times) without intermission, and with no ordinary wonder at the mingled powers of sarcasm, of irony, of indignant remonstrance, of pointed rebuke, and of imagery, in those few but bold and extraordinary figures, which not merely impress the mind of the reader at the moment by their force, but are seldom afterwards forgotten. The striking passages which it contains are nearly as numerous as the sentences—the whole forming a collection of what may be termed the flashes of indignant genius, roused by a sense of injury and aggression to throw out its consuming fires with no common force on the heads of the aggressors;—"I perceive in it," says the author of 'The Pursuits of Literature,' "genius, ability, dignity, imagination, and sights more than youthful poets when they dreamed, and sometimes, the philosophy of Plato and the wit of Lucian."

The pathetic lamentation for the loss of his son, and the glowing tribute to the memory of his old friend, in whose heart, he says, he had a place till the last beat, Lord Keppel, uncle to the Duke of Bedford, show a different, though not less striking style of powers. It has been objected, that the introduction of these topics, as they have little to do with the main question, are irrelevant. This criticism, even were it just, is trifling; but in fact these allusions evince much rhetorical skill, by tending to throw odium on the illiberal and ungenerous spirit shown in attacking a retired public servant, old, infirm and desponding, from the loss of that son who would have stood forth his defender; and of the ingratitude of at least one of his assailants towards the bosom friend and counsellor of his uncle, and the defender of his honour, as he expressly tells us, "in his rudest trials."

The jealousies with which he had to encounter during the whole of his public career, and to which allusion has been made in this work, are very truly and forcibly adverted to in the following passage:—

"I possessed not one of the qualities nor cultivated one of the arts that recommend men to the favour and protection of the great. I was not made for a minion or a tool. As little did I follow the trade of winning the hearts by imposing on the understandings of the people. At every step in my progress in life (for in every step was I traversed and opposed), and at every turnpike I met, I was obliged to show my passport, and again and again to prove my sole title to the honour of being useful to my country by a proof that I was not wholly unacquainted with its laws and the whole system of its interests both abroad and at home. Otherwise no rank, no toleration even for me. I had no arts but manly arts. On them I have stood, and, please God, in spite of the Duke of Bedford, and the Earl of Lauderdale, to the last gasp will I stand."

At the Duke, who has long passed to the common receptacle of Whig and Tory, of Commoner and Peer, he particularly points his eprehension. His Grace's little experience in public business, his partiality to the party whose tenets were supposed to sap or to threaten the foundations of all rank and property, the enormous grants of the crown to *his* family in former days, and his youth, were openings to an effective assault from any writer, but to an intellectual gladiator like Mr. Burke, offered overpowering advantages. To contend with such a man who possessed every weapon of argument at command, always was a service of some danger, for the ablest opponents never escaped from him without bearing traces of some grievous infliction; like the electrical fish, if you touched him in hostility he shook you to your centre. "I decline," said the indignant veteran, "his Grace's jurisdiction as a judge. I challenge the Duke of Bedford as a juror to pass upon the value of my services. I cannot recognize in his few and idle years, the competence to judge of my long and laborious life."

Not content with overthrowing the politician, he aims a more deadly blow at his possessions in alluding to the mode by which they were said to be acquired: one of the figures used is equally singular and powerful, rising as it does to a high strain of eloquence, and furnishing one of the most forcible examples in rhetoric of the *argumentum ad hominem.*—"The grants to the house of Russel (by Henry VIII.) were so enormous as not only to outrage economy, but even to stagger credibility. The Duke of Bedford is the leviathan among all the creatures of the crown. He tumbles about his unwieldy bulk; he plays and frolics in the ocean of the royal bounty. Huge as he is, and whilst 'he lies floating many a rood' he is still a creature. His ribs, his fins, his whalebone, his blubber, the very spiracles through which he spouts a torrent of brine against his origin, and covers me all over with the spray—every thing of him, and about him, is from the crown. Is it for him to question the dispensation of the royal favour?"

The express purpose of the pamphlet being to justify the bounty of the crown towards himself, it became necessary to advert to his claims and services, which he does by running a parallel between them and those of the Duke's ancestor, who had profited so largely by the same bounty. If the retrospect be deemed harsh or invidious, it must likewise be admitted there was no inconsiderable provocation.—

"I have supported with very great zeal, and I am told with some degree of success, those opinions, or if his Grace likes another expression better, those old prejudices which buoy up the ponderous mass of his nobility, wealth, and titles. I have omitted no exertion to prevent him and them from sinking to that level, to which the meretricious French faction his Grace at least coquets with, omit no exertion to reduce both. I have done all I could to discountenance their inquiries into the fortunes of those who hold large portions of wealth without any apparent merit of their own. I have strained every nerve to keep the Duke of Bedford in that situation which alone makes him my superior."

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"Why will his Grace, by attacking me, force me reluctantly to compare my little merit with that which obtained from the crown those prodigies of profuse donations by which he tramples on the mediocrity of humble and laborious individuals?

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"The first peer of the name, the first purchaser of the grants, was a Mr. Russel, a person of an ancient gentleman's family raised by being a minion of Henry the Eighth. As there generally is some resemblance of character to create these relations, the favourite was in all likelihood much such another as his master. The first of those immoderate grants was not taken from the ancient demesne of the crown, but from the recent confiscation of the ancient nobility of the land. The lion having sucked the blood of his prey, threw the offal carcase to the jackall in waiting. Having tasted once the food of confiscation, the favourites became fierce and ravenous. This worthy favourite's first grant was from the lay nobility. The second, infinitely improving upon the enormity of the first, was from the plunder of the church. In truth his Grace is somewhat excusable for his dislike to a grant like mine, not only in its quantity, but in its kind so different from his own.

" Mine was from a mild and benevolent sovereign; his from Henry the Eighth.

" Mine had not its fund in the murder of any innocent person of illustrious rank, or in the pillage of any body of unoffending men. His grants were from the aggregate and consolidated funds of judgments iniquitously legal, and from possessions voluntarily surrendered by the lawful proprietors with the gibbet at their door.

" The merit of the grantee whom he derives from, was that of being a prompt and greedy instrument of a *levelling* tyrant, who oppressed all descriptions of his people, but who fell with particular fury on every thing that was *great and noble.*

" Mine has been, in endeavouring to screen every man, in every class, from oppression, and particularly in defending the high and eminent, who in the bad times of confiscating princes, confiscating chief governors, or confiscating demagogues, are the most exposed to jealousy, avarice, and envy.

"The merit of the original grantee of his Grace's pensions, was in giving his hand to the work, and partaking the spoil with a prince, who plundered a part of the national church of his time and country.

"Mine was in defending the whole of the national church of my own time and my own country, and the whole of the national churches of all countries, from the principles and the examples which lead to ecclesiastical pillage, thence to a contempt of *all* prescriptive titles, thence to the pillage of *all* property, and thence to universal desolation.

"The merit of the origin of his Grace's fortune was in being a favourite and chief adviser to a prince, who left no liberty to their native country.

"My endeavour was to obtain liberty for the municipal country in which I was born, and for all descriptions and denominations in it. Mine was to support with unrelaxing vigilance every right, every privilege, every franchise, in this my adopted, my dearer, and more comprehensive country; and not only to preserve those rights in this chief seat of empire, but in every nation, in every land, in every climate, language, and religion, in the vast domain that is still under the protection, and the larger that was once under the protection of the British Crown.

"His founder's merits were, by arts in which he served his master and made his fortune, to bring poverty, wretchedness, and depopulation on his country.

"Mine were under a benevolent prince, in promoting the commerce, manufactures, and agriculture of his kingdom; in which his Majesty shows an eminent example, who even in his amusements is a patriot, and in hours of leisure an improver of his native soil.

"His founder's merit, was the merit of a gentleman raised by the arts of a Court, and the protection of a Wolsey, to the eminence of a great and potent lord. His merit in that eminence was by instigating a tyrant to injustice, to provoke a people to rebellion.

"My merit was, to awaken the sober part of the country, that they might put themselves on their guard against any one potent lord, or any greater number of potent lords, or any combination of great leading men of any sort, if even they should attempt to proceed in the same courses, but in the reverse order, that is, by instigating a corrupted populace to rebellion, and through that rebellion, introducing a tyranny yet worse than the tyranny which his Grace's ancestor supported, and of which he profited in the manner we behold in the despotism of Henry the Eighth.

"The political merit of the first pensioner of his Grace's house, was that of being concerned as a counsellor of state in advising, and in his person executing the conditions of a dishonourable peace with France; the surrendering the fortress of Boulogne, then our out-guard on the Continent. By that surrender, Calais, the key of France, and the bridle in the mouth of that power, was, not many years afterwards, finally lost.

"My merit has been in resisting the power and pride of France, under any form of its rule; but in opposing it with the greatest zeal and earnestness, when that rule appeared in the worst form it could assume; the worst indeed which the prime cause and principle of all evil could possibly give it. It was my endeavour by every means to excite a spirit in the house, where I had the honour of a seat, for carrying on with early vigour and decision, the most clearly just and necessary war, that this or any nation ever carried on; in order to save my country from the iron yoke of its power, and from the more dreadful contagion of its principles; to preserve, while they can be preserved, pure and untainted, the ancient, inbred integrity, piety, good nature, and good humour of the people of England from the dreadful pestilence which, beginning in France, threatens to lay waste the whole moral, and in a great degree the whole physical world, having done both in the focus of its most intense malignity.

"The labour of his Grace's founder, merited the curses, not loud but deep, of the Commons of England, on whom *he* and his master had effected a *complete Parliamentary Reform*, by making them in their slavery and humiliation, the true and adequate representatives of a debased, degraded, and undone people.

"My merits were, *in having had an active, though not always an ostentatious share, in every one act, without exception, of undisputed constitutional utility in my time*, and in having supported on all occasions, the authority, the efficiency, and the privileges of the Commons of Great Britain. I ended my services by a recorded and fully reasoned assertion on their own journals of their constitutional rights, and a vindication of their constitutional conduct. I laboured in all things to merit their inward approbation, and (along with the assistance of the largest, the greatest, and best of my endeavours), I received their free, unbiassed, public, and solemn thanks.

" Thus stands the account of the comparative merits of the crown grants which compose the Duke of Bedford's fortune as balanced against mine. In the name of common sense, why should the Duke of Bedford think, that none but of the house of Russel are entitled to the favour of the crown? Why should he imagine that no king of England has been capable of judging of merit but King Henry the Eighth?"

The collective character of the mad and mistaken philosophers who accomplished the overthrow of the French monarchy, is drawn with equal force and precision.

" In the French Revolution every thing is new; and from want of preparation to meet so unlooked-for an evil every thing is dangerous. Never before this time was a set of literary men converted into a gang of robbers and assassins. Never before did a den of bravoes and banditti assume the garb and tone of an academy of philosophers. Let me tell his grace that an union of such characters, monstrous as it seems, is not made for producing despicable enemies. * * *

" I assure his grace that if I state to him the designs of his enemies, in a manner which may appear to him ludicrous or impossible, I tell him nothing that has not exactly happened point by point, but twenty-four miles from our own shores. * * He is made for them in every part of their double character. As robbers, to them he is noble booty: as speculatists, he is a glorious subject for their experimental philosophy. He affords matter for an extensive analysis in all the branches of their science, geometrical, physical, civil and political.

" I am better able to enter into the character of this description of men than the noble Duke can be. I have lived long and variously in the world. Without any considerable pretensions to literature in myself, I have aspired to the love of letters. I have lived for a great many years in habitudes with those who professed them. I can form a tolerable estimate of what is likely to happen from a character chiefly dependant for fame and fortune on knowledge and talent, as well in its morbid and perverted state, as in that which is sound and natural. Naturally, men so formed and finished are the first gifts of Providence to the world. But when they have once thrown off the fear of God, which was in all ages too often the case, and the fear of man, which is now the case, and when in that state they come to understand one another and to act in corps, a more dreadful calamity cannot arise out of hell to scourge mankind. * * * *

" These philosophers consider men in their experiments, no more than they do mice in an air pump or in a recipient of mephitic gas. Whatever his Grace may think of himself, they look upon him, and every thing that belongs to him, with no more regard than they do upon the whiskers of that little long-tailed animal, that has been long the game of the grave, demure, insidious, spring-nailed, velvet-pawed, green-eyed philosophers, whether going upon two legs or upon four.

"His Grace's landed possessions are irresistibly inviting to an *agrarian* experiment. They are a downright insult upon the rights of man. They are more extensive than the territory of many of the Grecian republics; and they are without comparison more fertile than most of them. There are now republics in Italy, in Germany, and in Switzerland, which do not possess any thing like so fair and ample a domain. There is a scope for seven philosophers to proceed in their analytical experiments, upon Harrington's seven different forms of republics, in the acres of this one Duke.

"Hitherto they have been wholly unproductive to speculation; fitted for nothing but to fatten bullocks and to produce grain for beer, still more to stupify the dull English understanding. Abbe Sicyes however has whole nests of pigeon-holes full of constitutions, ready made, ticketed, sorted, and numbered; suited to every season and every fancy; some with the top of the pattern at the bottom, and some with the bottom at the top; some plain, some flowered; some distinguished for their simplicity; others for their complexity; some of blood colour; some of *boue de Paris;* some with directories, others without a direction; some with councils of elders and councils of youngsters; some without any council at all. Some where the electors choose the representatives; others where the representatives choose the electors. Some in long coats and some in short cloaks; some with pantaloons; some without breeches. Some with five shilling qualifications; some totally unqualified. So that no constitution-fancier may go unsuited from his shop, provided he loves a pattern of pillage, oppression, arbitrary imprisonment, confiscation, exile, revolutionary judgment, and legalized premeditated murder, in any shapes into which they can be put. What a pity it is that the progress of experimental philosophy should be checked by his Grace's monopoly! * * *

"Is it not a singular phenomenon that whilst the sans-culottes carcase butchers, and the philosophers of the shambles, are pricking their dotted lines upon his (the Duke's) hide, and like the print of the poor ox that we see at the shop windows at Charing Cross, alive as he is, and thinking no harm in the world, he is divided into rumps, and sirloins, and briskets, and into all sorts of pieces for roasting, boiling, and stewing, that all the time they are measuring *him*, his Grace is measuring *me*; is invidiously comparing the bounty of the crown with the deserts of the defender of his order, and in the same moment fawning on those who have the knife half out of the sheath—poor innocent,

'Pleas'd to the last, he crops the flow'ry food,
And licks the hand just rais'd to shed his blood.'"

Report asserts that the account given in this work of the origin of the Russel possessions is erroneous, though it has been said that the information was supplied from the library of his late Majesty at Buckingham House; be this as it may, no formal contradiction of the statement was made, and Mr. Burke is not likely to have risked mere conjecture where confutation was so easy. It was on his part rather a violent, but not an unfair retaliation; for against an invading and wanton enemy all arms may be used, and he must be a poor soldier who chooses the weaker in preference to the stronger weapon. The regret perhaps is, that he wielded his advantage rather imprudently than unjustly, by furnishing hints to the Agrarians or Jacobins of a future day, who may be inclined to make experiments in parcelling out those extensive and flourishing domains which he calls the "low, fat, Bedford level."

His other assailant on this occasion, the Earl of Lauderdale, still, to the delight of his friends, adorns that house of which he has long been so distinguished a member. Doubtless he has regretted the momentary injustice done to an old acquaintance and political leader with the same sincerity * as he is also said to have read his recantation from the then prevailing partialities toward the French system of freedom of 1793, and to that other stock subject for patriotic oratory, Parliamentary Reform. While so many

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* From many complimentary effusions of his Lordship to Mr. Burke, the following handsome one, applied to his Reform Bill in 1781, is selected—"He (Mr. Burke) was the only man in the country whose powers were equal to the forming and accomplishing so systematic and able a plan of reform; not a mean, narrow, wretched scheme of retrenchment, breaking in upon the dignity of the crown, and the honour of the nation, but a great and beautiful arrangement of office, calculated not to degrade a government, but to exalt and to adorn it."

able men however were thus misled upon such subjects, it must impress us still more with a conviction of the sagacity of their great opponent, who distinguished at a glance, what it cost others so much teaching and lecturing, and mental hammering and annealing, to learn, in the school of political mistake and failure.

CHAPTER VI.

Establishment of the Emigrant School at Penn.—Letters to W. H———, and to J. Gahagan, Esq.—Letters on a Regicide Peace.—His prophetic Spirit as opposed to that of Mr. Pitt.—Report concerning him.—Letter to Mrs. Leadbeater.—Letter on the Affairs of Ireland.—His Illness and Death.

It should have been mentioned in a previous page, that in the year 1794, Mr. Burke, commiserating the destitute condition of many of the emigrant children whose fathers had perished either by the guillotine or the sword in the general convulsion of their country, and of others whose means were inadequate to the purposes of education, applied to government for assistance in order to form an establishment adapted to supply this want, which he volunteered to superintend. This request was very liberally complied with. The house appropriated for the purpose had been the residence of his old friend General Haviland, which Mr. Burke, in the year 1793, induced government to lease from the person to whom it had been sold by the devizees of the General, in order to fit it up for the reception of several of the unhappy French clergy who, houseless and pennyless, were scattered through the country, subsisting on charity. From some unexpected difficulties which occurred, this humane design at the moment did not take effect. The house however continued in possession of the head of the barrack establishment, General de Lancey, in trust for his Majesty, by whom it was now given up, by order of the Lords of the Treasury, to the Duke of Portland, the Marquis of Buckingham, the Lord Chancellor, Mr. Windham, Mr. Burke, Dr. Walker King, and others, as trustees for the management of the school, and it was opened immediately afterwards. The Abbé Maraine presided over this establishment, and had for his coadjutor the learned and amiable Abbé Chevallier.

An antiquarian correspondent, who was connected with this institution as treasurer, after the death of the original founder, having kindly communicated to the author some memoranda concerning it, they cannot perhaps be better given than in his own words.

" Penn, in Buckinghamshire, a bold promontory, to which Mr. Burke frequently resorted, at one time as the friend of General Haviland, and latterly as the patron of the emigrant school there, is situated about three miles north-west of Beaconsfield. Many of the residents are distinguished for patriarchal longevity, not a few of them attaining a century of years. The family of Grove trace an uninterrupted descent from the conquest as proprietors of the same estate. The last possessor, Mr. Edmund Grove, died in Júne 1823, at the advanced age of ninety-four; and being well known in this part of the country as a fair representative of the ancient English yeoman, may be worth noticing. When young, he had been the play-fellow of the late Viscount Curzon, and of John Baker Holroyd, who died Earl of Sheffield, and was known to most of the surrounding nobility and gentry by the name of Yeoman Grove—a name now disused for the more assuming appellation of Esquire, but formerly applied to those who farmed their own estates. Yeoman Grove was likewise known to his late Majesty, who permitted him an unusual freedom. Whenever they met in the street at Windsor, which was not unfrequent on market-day, he would grasp the royal hand with fervour, and in a way peculiarly his own, inquire—'How does your Majesty do?—How is the Queen?—How are all the children?' which commonly occasioned the Royal Personage a hearty good-humoured laugh.

"Tyler's Green House, the residence of General Haviland, was formerly the property and residence of the Bakers, ancestors of the Earl of Sheffield, of Sheffield Place, county of Sussex. It is now no more; 'nought could reprieve the tottering mansion from its fall.' In 1822 it was sold by auction in lots, of course pulled down and carried away, so that scarcely a vestige now remains to mark the spot where senators were wont to converse, and wit, whim, and eloquence to flow in no ordinary current amid the social circle formed by the Burkes. Previous to the demolition, I had a correct drawing made of the front, which I have placed among my illustrations of the county of Bucks.

"To those who are acquainted with the country, the guides to the site of the mansion are two of the largest and most lofty fir-trees in the kingdom. The General was accustomed to call them his two grenadiers; one was more lofty than the other, an unlucky monkey kept by Mrs. Haviland having ascended to the summit of the other, and cropped the leading branch. These trees may be distinctly seen from the terrace at Windsor—from Harrow-on-the-Hill

—from St. Paul's Church—and from the rising ground near Reading: in the woody neighbourhood of Penn they occasionally serve as a guide to bewildered pedestrians. I saved them from the levelling axe in 1798, by my representation of their utility, and I am assured that the present noble proprietor, Richard Earl Howe, will not suffer so grand a feature on his extensive domains in Buckinghamshire to be destroyed.

"However incredible it may appear, it is vouched for as a fact by persons of respectability in the neighbourhood, that the cannonading at the reduction of Valenciennes in 1793 was distinctly heard by the inhabitants of Penn. This no doubt will be laughed at by many as utterly beyond belief, but there are many authentic instances on record of the distance to which sound occasionally travels, depending no doubt on a peculiar state of the atmosphere at the time: it is understood, beyond question, that the cannonading on that occasion was heard at Dover. During the late war, the firing of cannon when ships were engaged at sea during the night has likewise been distinguished at Penn; the time has been frequently noted, and the fact shortly afterward ascertained from the public papers.

"In April, 1796,* the emigrant school was opened, and Mr. Burke, for the remainder of his life, watched over it with the solicitude, not merely of a friend, but of a father. His smiles might be said to have gladdened the hearts of the exiles; I have witnessed many interesting scenes there of that nature;—they were doomed, alas! too soon to lose their kind protector. At the annual distribution of prizes, the senior scholar delivered a Latin oration in the presence of a large assembly of nobility and gentry in the great hall, in which Mr. Burke was always alluded to as their parent and friend.

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* This must be an error of my correspondent. The school at least existed previous to this time, but may have been removed at the time stated to the house in question, as in another communication he says he delivered up possession, on the part of government, to Mr. Burke, March 30, 1796.

"Mr. Burke assigned to these youths a blue uniform, wearing in their hats a white cockade inscribed 'Vive le Roi;' those who had lost their fathers had it placed on a bloody label, those who had lost uncles on a black one. The Marquis of Buckingham made them a present of a small brass cannon, and a pair of colours, which were displayed on public days, and seemed a source of no little pride and gratification to those future defenders of loyalty.

"After the death of Mr. Burke I was appointed treasurer, and received from the Lords of the Treasury fifty pounds per month for the support of the establishment. Upon the restoration of legitimate monarchy in France in 1814, the money was remitted to me thence, until the dissolution of the institution on the 1st of August, 1820, when on the departure of the superior and the pupils, the colours were presented to me as a token of remembrance, and I retain them with much satisfaction, from the interesting associations they recal to mind.

"Many of the youths educated in this college so humanely founded through the influence and under the auspices of Mr. Burke, at present occupy important stations in various parts of the dominions of the King of France, and for their success in life they ought ever to regard with sentiments of gratitude and veneration the memory of that great and good man."

The superintendance of this school became a source of occupation and amusement, calculated to divert an occasional gloom that darkened his mind, and as a relaxation from the weight of heavier labours. The interest which he took in its success and continuance may be judged by the earnest manner in which he bequeaths it in his will to the protection and favour of the noble persons joined with him in the trust, while the wish is expressed that it may be placed under the immediate care of Dr. Walker King and Dr. Lawrence; conceiving perhaps that, as being his personal friends, and from their greater acquaintance with such matters, those gentlemen would take more interest than strangers could be supposed to do, in giving stability to an institution to which he had given existence.

Instances of his personal kindness and attention towards the members of the establishment and their friends, were shown in a variety of little ways, more particularly in presents from his larder of any delicacy which it did not so much lie in their way to procure. This very often occasioned an amusing scene to the friends of the family, between him and his housekeeper, Mrs. Webster. She, it seems, had more regard for the credit of her master's table than for the appetites of the emigrants, and whenever there was any thing nice in the larder, such as a haunch of venison, or game intended for the second course, she was obliged to keep watch over the dainty, lest it should be slily dispatched off to the "French people" by her improvident master, and her skill and management in conducting the repast be thus called in question by his visitors. Sometimes however he contrived to elude her vigilance, and sometimes he was caught and disappointed. In attempting one day to send off a present of venison intended to be dressed for company, the wary housekeeper, who was upon the alert, darted upon him as upon a thief caught in the fact—"Sir, Sir," she cried out, fastening upon the article in question—"I cannot part with my haunch—I cannot indeed—I shall be ruined if I lose my haunch—we shall have nothing else fit to dress for dinner." "But my dear Mrs. Webster, pray consider these poor people—" "I can consider nothing, Sir, but that we shall have no second course—give it away to French people indeed!" "But these poor people have been accustomed to such things in their own country, and for one day I think we can do without them." "Bless me, Sir, remember there are Lord and Lady ——— and Mr. and Mrs. ——— coming to dinner, and without something of this kind I shall get into shocking disgrace—No, no, Sir, I cannot part with my haunch;"—and adhering rigidly to this determination her master was at length obliged to retreat, foiled in his object.

The Abbé Maraine, the superior of the school, who was a good natured man, and had little idea of English school discipline, was complaining one day of the indocility of some of his pupils, when Mr. Burke told him he must exert his cane with more vigour, and if that would not do, he must flog—and flog soundly. The Abbé appeared somewhat shocked at the idea of this punishment. "Do not fear its success," replied Mr. Burke, "it is our chief receipt in England for turning out eminent men—it seldom fails—good scholars, nay good poets are made by the rod—and why not good soldiers?" The superior ultimately adopted the recipe, and after a time confessed (in his own words) "that he believed Monsieur Burke was as right in that point as he had been in so many others."

His little personal communication with most of the Ministry about this period, appears evident from the following letter written to William H———, Esq., afterwards of Hanwell Park, Middlesex, who had applied for his interest in the India House, a place where, above all others, it was least likely, for obvious reasons, to have effect.

"My dear Sir,

"You have always had my opinion and good wishes; and your conduct has been such, that I am sure in serving your interest, I should do good service to the public. But why you 'formed any of your hopes on the support which you may derive from that influence which *I alone* can give to your application' is to me quite inconceivable. If I did not know your kind partiality towards me, I should think you laughed at me. I to have influence in the India House or the Board of Control! I to have influence to protect any of those whom Hastings is resolved to ruin! Surely you know that I could not name a cadet to go to India. I could not raise or kick down an Indian ant-hill; much less remove the mountains that Hastings heaps on those he means to crush.

"If you imagine that I have any influence with Mr. ———, (what you call the Board of Control is but a name) in *India affairs,* you are mistaken, in spite of the experience you have had of the inutility of my endeavours to prevent ———, and all iniquity in him, from being sent to India. Besides, I seldom see one of the Ministers. Mr. Pitt not for more than a twelvemonth. The Duke of Portland not for several months. Mr. Dundas but once on a particular affair as remote as pole from pole from India and its concerns. The Chancellor once or twice only, and I know that in these things he will not interfere. In my opinion nothing could possibly be more fatal to you than the smallest use of my name in any matter relating to Bengal.

"The truth is, that Mr. Dundas, I have some reason to believe, has a good will towards me; and would not persecute any person on my account,—but I know, and you know too, that your business is involved in *twenty* (or *hourly,* the exact word cannot be made out from the original which now lies before me) difficulties, which those who hate your cause in the direction could make use of to frustrate your expectations; and I know to a certainty that he would not enter into a conflict with them on my account, nor struggle with those embarrasments which in a case of a warm private friend he would exert himself to surmount.

"The only man in office I habitually see is Mr. Windham; who has been here several times since my calamity. He was here, and just going off, when I received your letter; I had just time to speak to him on the business. I recommended you to him as strongly as I could; but he can do nothing. However you have his leave to call upon him—and I am sure he will serve you if he can; of which however, as I have told you, I have much doubt. But use the best means you have. You think I can do much with A———, which is more than I think myself—I will write to him with pleasure. I most sincerely wish you all good, and am with great regard and esteem,

"My dear Sir,
"Your most faithful and
"Obedient humble servant,
"Jan. 24, 1796. "EDMUND BURKE."

The following is in a different strain; but it more particularly explains the cause of the seclusion in which he lived, as mentioned in the preceding, which it thus appears was a grief that nothing could overcome. It is addressed to Mr. Gahagan, the father of the present Baroness de Montesquieu.

"MY DEAR SIR,

"You have been very good and charitable in wishing to visit this infirmary, where my wife, my poor old friend Will. Burke, and myself, are all lame; Mrs. Burke with the very same lameness which took her some years ago, without effect, to Margate, where we had the pleasure of seeing you. The sight of such a sympathising friend is a comfort to those who are no longer in society. Since my calamity * I have not dined out of my own house; nor am I fond of receiving any new acquaintance; my business and my pleasure in this life being both of them completely over.

"When I mentioned Mons. de Montesquieu, it was not as a man I wished to see on account of his own distinguished merit, or the fame of his family, which the world is so full of, and to whose labours the world owes so much:—it is as part of an old friend that I who refuse all new acquaintance took the liberty of desiring him to accompany you. Our house has very little lodging-room, and it is all we could do to lodge you two. Our settled family takes up four beds, and my old friend Dr. Walker King, whom I have not seen for a good while, and whom I am not likely to see for this year again, we expect here, with his wife and child. We have not a bed for a third person;—so that I must deny myself for the present (and it is a real self-denial) the society of the worthy and most respectable gentleman you proposed to accompany yourself and your son the Baron.

"Alas! my dear friend, I am not what I was two years ago.—Society is too much for my nerves. I sleep ill at night; and am drowsy and sleep much in the day.—Every exertion of spirits which I make for the society I cannot refuse, costs me much, and leaves me doubly heavy and dejected after it. Such is the person you come to see; or rather the wreck of what was never a very first-rated vessel.—Such as I am, I feel infinitely for the kindness of those old

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* The death of his son.

friends who remember me with compassion. As to new, I never see one but such French as come to visit the school, which supplies to me the void in my own family, and it is my only comfort. For the sake of that I still submit to see some who are still more miserable than I am.

" Adieu, my dear sir, until Monday. Mrs. Burke and my niece salute you cordially.

" Ever yours,

" June 22, 1796. " EDMUND BURKE."

This letter furnishes a striking picture of a great mind reduced by the influence of sorrow to a state of the most painful despondency. Yet it must serve to give us a higher impression of the original and even still untamed vigour of that mind, to find him at this moment detaching it from all these melancholy yet unavoidable contemplations to renewed exertions with his pen now almost pronounced to be irresistible, for the patriotic purpose of dissipating a gathering gloom over the public mind, nearly as heavy as that which overshadowed his own.

The misfortunes of the war, and the triumphant career of the republican arms, unchecked by any reverse on the continent of Europe, had occasioned a momentary revulsion of public feeling, not uncommon in England. From warm anticipations of success, fears still stronger began to be entertained of the final result of the struggle. Several friends of the ministry, if not some of the ministry themselves, were among the victims of these fears; and Lord Auckland's pamphlet, already alluded to, became a kind of ground-work to the superstructure of apprehensions raised by this timid order of politicians, and by those who had from the first opposed the contest with France. A cry for peace was therefore pretty generally diffused. Mr. Pitt, either really affected by it, or willing to chime in with the humour of the day, acquiesced, by opening negociations through two or three different channels, with the agents of the Republic, who received our advances as any one acquainted with the revolutionary character must have known and expected, with no little insolence. Indignation, however, was not immediately roused. We sustained a rebuff or two patiently. In this situation, Mr. Burke, feeling for the national dignity, and determined to persuade or to shame it out of its fears, produced towards the end of the summer, in two letters, addressed to a Member of the House of Commons, "*Thoughts on a Regicide Peace.*"

This is another of those marvellous productions, which, combining strong and various powers of argumentation, with great eloquence and rhetorical skill, conveyed with little or no meretricious ornament to the understanding, occasioned a host of replies, but scarcely any thing which can be dignified with the name of answer. The best perhaps is in one of the critical journals of the day;* it is said to have been written by an eminent literary character, now a most distinguished member of the House of Commons. On the question at issue, their opinions were utterly at variance. But as genius can seldom be insensible to genius, however opposite their political speculations, this writer characterises the work of his great opponent in the following terms:—

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* Monthly Review.

" Such is the outline of this publication ; of which if it be considered merely as a work of literature it might be sufficient to say, that it is scarcely surpassed in excellence by any of the happiest productions of the best days of its author. The same vast reach and comprehension of view—the same unbounded variety of allusion, illustration, and ornament, drawn from every province of nature and of science—the same unrivalled mastery over language—the same versatility of imagination which at will transforms itself from sublime and terrific genius into gay and playful fancy—the same happy power of relieving the harshness of political dispute by beautiful effusions of sentiment, and of dignifying composition by grave and lofty maxims of moral and civil wisdom—the same inexhaustible ingenuity in presenting even common ideas under new and fascinating shapes—the same unlimited sway over the human passions, which fills us at his pleasure with indignation, with horror, or with pity ; which equally commands our laughter or our tears ; in a word, the same wit, humour, pathos, invention, force, dignity, copiousness, and magnificence, are conspicuous in this production, which will immortalize the other writings of Mr. Burke. There is nothing ordinary in his view of a subject. He is perhaps of all writers the one of whom it may be said with the most strict truth, that no idea appears hackneyed in his hands ; no topic seems common place when he treats it. When the subject must (from the very narrowness of human conception which bounds even the genius of Mr. Burke) be borrowed, the turn of thought and the manner of presenting it are his own. The attitude and drapery are peculiar to the master."

It may be noticed that two or three others of his most able yet determined opponents (and the fact is mentioned because hostile testimony on such an occasion will be least suspected of exaggeration) look upon this work as his greatest effort in politics—certainly the greatest on the question of the French Revolution; in the strong, full, yet clear train of argument he pursues, the precision of view and unity of purpose displayed in the plan, and the sobriety with which they are submitted to the serious consideration of the kingdom.

As the Letter to a Noble Lord might in many of its passages be considered a kind of field-day to the light troops of his imagination, sarcasm, and humour, so the "Regicide Peace" may be considered the heavy artillery—the breaching battery of his judgment and reasoning powers. Besides it is a kind of dying legacy to his country. It was the last thing he lived to publish; and it is believed to have had no common effect in re-animating the drooping courage of the nation. "To a people who have been once proud and great, and great because they were proud," he observes in his first page, "a change in the national spirit is the most terrible of all revolutions."

The outset offers a profound remark, which in a few words appears to demolish a favourite popular notion, that kingdoms resemble men in having their periods of youth, maturity, and total decay, and is levelled at the fears of those who fancied that England was approaching her last stage—

"I am not quite of the mind of those speculators who seem assured that necessarily, and by the constitution of things, all states have the same periods of infancy, manhood, and decrepitude, that are found in the individuals who compose them. Parallels of this sort rather furnish similitudes to illustrate or to adorn, than supply analogies from whence to reason. The objects which are attempted to be forced into an analogy are not found in the same classes of existence. Individuals are physical beings subject to laws universal and invariable. The immediate cause acting in these laws may be obscure; the general results are subjects of certain calculation. But commonwealths are not physical but moral essences. They are artificial combinations, and in their proximate efficient cause, the arbitrary productions of the human mind. We are not yet acquainted with the laws which necessarily influence the stability of that kind of work made by that kind of agent.

"There is not in the physical order (with which they do not appear to hold any assignable connexion) a distinct cause by which any of those fabrics must necessarily grow, flourish, or decay; nor in my opinion does the world produce any thing more determinate on that subject, than what may serve as an amusement (liberal indeed, and ingenious, but still only an amusement) for speculative men. I doubt whether the history of mankind is yet complete enough, if ever it can be so, to furnish grounds for a sure theory on the internal causes which necessarily affect the fortune of a state. I am far from denying the operation of such causes; but they are infinitely uncertain and much more obscure, and much more difficult to trace than the foreign causes that tend to raise, to depress, and sometimes to overwhelm a community."

Touching on this subject in the letter to W. Elliot, Esq., he says—

"I am not of opinion that the race of men and the commonwealths they create, like the bodies of individuals, grow effete, and languid, and bloodless, and ossify by the necessities of their own conformation, and the fatal operation of longevity and time. These analogies between bodies natural and politic, though they may sometimes illustrate arguments, furnish no argument of themselves. They are but too often used under colour of a specious philosophy, to find apologies for the despair of laziness and pusillanimity, and to excuse the want of all manly efforts, when the exigencies of our country call for them more loudly."

The first letter relates generally to the overtures for peace, in which some incidental and relative matters are discussed. The second enters into an examination of the genius and character of the French Revolution, as it regards other nations, and an opinion is hazarded, supported by some facts, that the aggrandizement of the nation at the expence of part, or the whole of the rest of Europe, in a more direct and violent way than the common policy of states would warrant, formed an inducement with some of her statesmen to countenance the first excesses of the people.

In the first letter he contends, that the regicide faction is not France, and that to treat with it is to recognise robbery and usurpation. To attack our feelings and prejudices on the most vulnerable side, all the art of the rhetorician is called in to the aid of the statesman, by inquiring what we should think were the case our own, as in the following splendid passage:—

"Mere locality does not constitute a body politic. Had Cade and his gang got possession of London, they would not have been the Lord Mayor, Aldermen, and Common Council. The body politic of France existed in the majesty of its throne; in the dignity of its nobility; in the honour of its gentry; in the sanctity of its clergy; in the reverence of its magistracy; in the weight and consideration due to its landed property in the several bailliages; in the respect due to its moveable substance represented by the corporations of the kingdom. All these particular *moleculæ* united, form the great mass of what is truly the body politic in all countries. They are so many deposits and receptacles of justice; because they can only exist by justice. Nation is a moral essence, not a geographical arrangement, or a denomination of the nomenclator. France, though out of her territorial possession, exists; because the sole possible claimant, I mean the proprietary, and the government to which the proprietary adheres, exists and claims. God forbid, that if you were expelled from your house by ruffians and assassins, that I should call the material walls, doors, and windows of ———, the ancient and honourable family of ———; am I to transfer to the intruders, who, not content to turn you out naked to the world, would rob you of your very name, all the esteem and respect

I owe to you? The regicides in France are not France. France is out of her bounds, but the kingdom is the same.

"To illustrate my opinions on this subject, let us suppose a case, which, after what has happened, we cannot think absolutely impossible, though the enquiry is to be abominated, and the event deprecated with our most ardent prayers. Let us suppose then, that our gracious Sovereign was sacrilegiously murdered; his exemplary queen, at the head of the matronage of this land, murdered in the same manner; that those princesses whose beauty and modest elegance are the ornaments of the country, and who are the leaders and patterns of the ingenuous youth of their sex, were put to a cruel and ignominious death, with hundreds of others, mothers and daughters, ladies of the first distinction; that the Prince of Wales and the Duke of York, princes the hope and pride of the nation, with all their brethren, were forced to fly from the knives of assassins—that the whole body of our excellent clergy were either massacred or robbed of all, and transported—the Christian religion, in all its denominations, forbidden and persecuted; the law totally, fundamentally, and in all its parts destroyed—the judges put to death by revolutionary tribunals—the Peers and Commons robbed to the last acre of their estates; massacred, or in exile and in beggary—that the whole landed property should share the very same fate—that every military and naval officer of honour and rank, almost to a man, should be placed in the same description of confiscation and exile—that the principal merchants and bankers should be drawn out, as from an hen-coop, for slaughter—that the citizens of our greatest and most flourishing cities, when the hand and the machinery of the hangman were not found sufficient, should have been collected in the public squares, and massacred by thousands with cannon; if three hundred thousand others should have been doomed to a situation worse than death in noisome and pestilential prisons; in such a case, is it in the faction of robbers I am to look for my country? Would this be the England that you and I, and even strangers, admired, honoured, loved, and cherished? Would not the exiles of England alone be my government and my fellow citizens? Would not their places of refuge be my temporary country? Would not all my duties and all my affections be there and there only? Should I consider myself as a traitor to my country, and deserving of death, if I knocked at the door and heart of every potentate in christendom to succour my friends, and to avenge them on their enemies? Could I, in any way, show myself more a patriot? What should I think of those potentates who insulted their suffering brethren; who treated them as vagrants, or at least as mendicants; and could find no allies, no friends, but in regicide murderers and robbers? What ought I to think and feel, if being geographers instead of kings, they recognised the desolated cities, the wasted fields, and the rivers polluted with blood, of this geometrical measurement, as the honourable member of Europe, called England? In that condition what should we think of Sweden, Denmark, or Holland, or whatever power afforded us churlish and treacherous hospitality, if they should invite us to join the standard of our king, our laws, and our religion, if they should give us a direct promise of protection—if after all this, taking advantage of our deplorable situation, which left us no choice, they were to treat us as the lowest and vilest of all mercenaries? If they were to send us far from the aid of our king, and our suffering country, to squander us away in the most pestilential climates for a venal enlargement of their own territories, for the purpose of trucking them, when obtained, with those very robbers and murderers they had called upon us to oppose with our blood? What would be our sentiments, if in that miserable service we were not to be considered either as English, or as Swedes, Dutch, Danes, but as outcasts of the human race? Whilst we were fighting those battles of their interests, and as their soldiers, how should we feel if we were to be excluded from all their cartels? How must we feel, if the pride and flower of the English nobility and gentry, who might escape the pestilential clime and the devouring sword, should, if taken prisoners, be delivered over as rebel subjects, to be condemned as rebels, as traitors, as the vilest of all criminals, by tribunals formed of Maroon negro slaves, covered over with the blood of their masters, who were made free and organized into judges, for their robberies and murders? What should we feel under this inhuman, insulting, and barbarous protection of Muscovites, Swedes or Hollanders? Should we not obtest Heaven, and whatever justice there is yet on earth? Oppression makes wise men mad; but the distemper is still the madness of the wise, which is better than the sobriety of fools. The cry is the voice of sacred misery, exalted, not into wild raving, but into the sanctified phrenzy of prophecy and inspiration—in that bitterness of soul, in that indignation of suffering virtue, in that exaltation of despair, would not persecuted English loyalty cry out, with an awful warning voice, and denounce the destruction that waits on monarchs, who consider fidelity to them as the most degrading of all vices, who suffer it to be punished as the most abominable of all crimes; and who have no respect but for rebels, traitors, regicides, and furious negro slaves, whose crimes have broke their chains? Would not this warm language of high indignation have more of sound reason in it, more of real affection, more of true attachment, than all the lullabies of flatterers, who would hush monarchs to sleep in the arms of death? Let them be well convinced, that if ever this example should prevail in its whole extent, it will have its full operation. Whilst kings stand firm on their base, though under that base there is a sure wrought mine, there will not be wanting to their levees a single person of those who are attached to their fortune, and not to their persons or cause: but hereafter none will support a tottering throne. Some will fly for fear of being crushed under the ruin; some will join in making it. They will seek in the destruction of royalty, fame, and power, and wealth, and the homage of kings, with *Reubel*, with *Carnot*, with *Revelliere*, and with the *Merlins*, and the *Talliens*, rather than suffer exile and beggary with the *Condés*, or the *Broglios*, the *Castries*, the *D'Avrais*, the *Serrents*, the *Cazalés*, and the long line of loyal, suffering patriot nobility, or to be butchered with the oracles and the victims of the laws, the *D'Ormesons*, the *D'Espremenils*, and the *Malesherbes*. This example we shall give, if instead of adhering to our fellows in a cause which is an honour to us all, we abandon the lawful government and lawful corporate body of France, to hunt for a shameful and ruinous fraternity, with this odious usurpation that disgraces civilized society and the human race.

" And is then example nothing? It is every thing. Example is the school of mankind, and they will learn at no other. This war is a war against that example. It is not a war for Louis the Eighteenth, or even for the property, virtue, fidelity of France. It is a war for George the Third, for Francis the Second, and for all the dignity, property, honour, virtue, and religion of England, of Germany, and of all nations."—

A third letter, treating on the rupture of the negociations, the terms of peace proposed, and the resources of the country for the continuance of the war, was in progress through the press when death snatched the great writer from the scene of his labours. A fourth letter also, which, it has been already observed, was written but not completed, pursues the subject through its various relations, chiefly in the form of comment on that of Lord Auckland; to the doctrines of which it gives as complete an overthrow in reasoning, as it is possible for any thing of the kind to receive.

In conversation his opinions were quite as decided and not less forcibly expressed. When the negociations at Lisle which he thought so derogatory to the country, were going on, and in the opinions of some promised peace, he said from the first that such a result was impossible—" that he was only astonished how the people of England, or such a body of men as the English Ministry, could for a moment believe that the republican leaders would grant peace, even were peace desirable, without first requiring the surrender of our national honour. They are doubly foes," he added ; " for they would not only injure but insult you." To a gentleman who began to talk to him on the probable success of the negociation then pending, and consequent termination of the revolution ; " The termination of the revolution ! to be sure !" exclaimed Mr. Burke. " The revolution over ! Why, Sir, it is scarcely begun ! As yet you have only heard the first music ; you'll see the actors presently ; but neither you nor I shall see the close of the drama."

Mr. Fox himself is more than once said to have expressed his astonishment at the singular fulfilment of his predictions ; and when a nobleman of some political celebrity, in allusion to the vehemence of Mr. Burke on the question of revolutionary politics, hinted an opinion that he was a splendid madman— " Whether mad or inspired," is reported to have been the answer, " fate seems to have determined that he shall be an uncommon political prophet."

These letters are worthy to be recurred to by those who have passed through the tempestuous and alarming period of which they treat, or to those who, too young at the time for much reflection on public matters, may wish to know what it really was, and to what degree of terror the continued success of the revolutionary arms and principles had given rise. They furnish the best idea, if not of the origin, at least of the deadly nature of the war in which the country was engaged; of the impossibility of concluding peace upon any terms consistent with the national honour and security; and they prove, what perhaps will not now be disputed, that peace at that moment in any way would have been more dangerous to our best interests than the hostility in which we were compelled to persevere. The character which is drawn of what he calls "the Cannibal Republic," in different parts of the letters, is indeed an extraordinary effort, for any thing equal to which in completeness and force the reader will in vain look in any historical detail, ancient or modern. The exposure is as complete as if every individual member of the fearful machine, however minute, was directly under his eye. It is the finished piece of dissection of a wonderful political anatomist, who not merely traces the broad outline, the external figure and features of his *subject*, but whose knife penetrates to the heart, and whose saw bares even the *sensorium* of this great moral monster, displaying the whole of its secret workings, motives, and principles to the view of the world, the causes of its inflammatory temperament, and morbid yet fearful vigour.

Nothing is more remarkable in these letters than the prophetic truths which they contain. Futurity may almost be said to have been open to his view on the subject they discuss. He wrote under a strong impression that his death was not far distant. "I shall not live to behold," he says in his first page, "the unravelling of the intricate plot which saddens and perplexes the awful drama of Providence now acting on the moral theatre of the world. Whether for thought or for action I am at the end of my career." At the conclusion of the first letter he again adds—"What I say, I *must* say at once. Whatever I write is in its nature testamentary. It may have the weakness, but it has the sincerity of a dying declaration." When peace was eagerly sought, and as eagerly anticipated perhaps because it was sought, he calmly tells the country, "We are not at the end of our struggle, nor near it. Let us not deceive ourselves; we are at the *beginning* of great troubles." Speaking of the lukewarmness of the friends of Ministry against the regicides as a body, we are told, "much less were they made to infuse into our minds that stubborn persevering spirit which alone is capable of bearing up against those vicissitudes of fortune which will probably occur, and those burthens which must be inevitably borne in a long war. I speak it emphatically, and with a desire that it should be marked, *in a long war*." A little further on, he hints at a period of twenty years or more;—with what surprising accuracy on all these points it is needless to point out.

Alluding, in another part, to the partition of Poland, which he had never ceased to reprobate, are the following remarkable words—"*Hereafter the world will have cause to rue this iniquitous measure, and they most who were most concerned in it.*" Who, on reading this, will not immediately bring to remembrance the calamities and degradations sustained for so many years afterwards by Austria, Prussia, and Russia, and more particularly the former two, the actors in that spoliation,—under the iron gripe of Buonaparte? Will not these be immediately acknowledged as the unerring marks of retributive justice? Is it quite clear, notwithstanding the present calm, that the measure of retribution is full? Against the spoliation of the territory of France also, as of that of Poland,* Mr. Burke laboured hard to teach the Allies the impolicy in 1792 and 1793, but he laboured in vain; and the consequences ultimately were, that condign punishment for the attempt which he anticipates for them throughout these letters. They may be considered indeed that great man's political will. The fulfilment of so many predictions is one of the most curious circumstances in modern history. At all times, it is true, dying words have been considered not merely impressive things, but in many instances have turned out surprisingly correct; and indeed if men are ever for a moment permitted by the Almighty to have the slightest degree of foreknowledge, it is probably near to the termination of life, when the mind, almost abstracted from its tottering tenement, and in some degree purified from temporal interests and passions, forms the most correct and unprejudiced estimate of surrounding circumstances,—of what is, and perhaps of what is to come. The sentiments of ordinary men at such times are worth serious consideration. But those of a wise and pre-eminent person, such as in the instance before us, distinguished through life for the possession of much penetration and knowledge, claim no inconsiderable portion of our reverence and regard.

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* It seems to have escaped general notice, that the misfortunes of Poland in her final partition, may be in some degree attributed, however undesignedly on their part, to Mr. Fox and the Opposition, in the strong and unusual means made use of to thwart Mr. Pitt in the business of Oczakow. They lay claim, it is true, to the merit of having prevented war on that occasion. But if war had then taken place with England for one act of violence comparatively trivial, Russia, in all probability, would not have ventured upon a second and still greater aggression, involving the existence of a nation, with the certainty of a second war. Nothing after all might have saved Poland from the combination then on foot against her; but it is certain that Mr. Pitt, from recent experience, had little encouragement to make the attempt.

It has been already observed, that though a decided advocate for war as the less evil to which the country was exposed, he condemned almost uniformly, after the first few months, not only some part of the principle, but almost the whole of the plan on which it was conducted. That it was most unfortunate is true; but though this would seem to corroborate Mr. Burke's judgment of the matter, it by no means finally decides the question against those who took the most active part in directing the separate measures. There were other differences, however, in his and in Mr. Pitt's views, which seem also to tell in favour of the superior sagacity of the former, and as they bore on what have since proved some of the leading points of the contest, may be worth enumerating.

Mr. Burke, from a very early period in its progress, declared that it would be an arduous and a long war.

Mr. Pitt, on the contrary, not only publicly in the

House of Commons, but at his own fire-side, at his own table, and in the most unreserved manner to his confidential friends, maintained that the war would be short, and the superiority on our part not doubtful.

Mr. Burke, from the moment of the declaration of hostilities, entreated, nay, almost prayed, to the coalesced powers, that the integrity of the French territory should be preserved sacred and inviolate, as necessary, not only to their own immediate success, but to the future equilibrium of Europe.

Mr. Pitt, from the circumstances attending the surrender of her first towns to the Allies, pretty plainly intimated some intention of permitting her to be dismembered, and this is said to have been the first thing that thoroughly roused her to indignation, and to the most determined resistance.

Mr. Burke wished to have it perfectly understood in France, that the war was levelled at the faction which governed her, not against the nation.

Mr. Pitt thought it unnecessary or useless, in his public manifestoes, to be very precise in drawing the distinction between them.

Mr. Burke urged that from the peculiar nature of the contest, France should be attacked only in France, and that frittering away our force against her colonies, and even reducing them one after another, neither crippled her in the slightest degree, nor in point of fact advanced one step nearer to subduing her.

Mr. Pitt, by the sacrifices he made to effect these conquests, evidently attributed an importance to them which subsequent events by no means warranted.

At the conclusion of the struggle we have seen all Mr. Burke's opinions verified or followed to the very letter. The war proved trying and long beyond precedent. France to be overpowered was obliged to be attacked in France. The allied Sovereigns, who in self-defence had to attack the old root of jacobin aggression which had sprouted afresh in the form of an Emperor, found it necessary to come forward and declare that they made war not upon her, but upon her ambitious ruler. And with some hundreds of thousands of men at their backs, which would have seemed to place the country at their nod, they were obliged explicitly to declare and to guarantee the strict integrity of her territory before they could hope to succeed in their design.

In all the later writings of Burke, taking the passages almost at random, they give us his idea of the *spirit* which, in the first instance at least, the war was attempted to be carried on.

" It was not of that sort of war," alluding to the selfish and interested motives of the Allies, " that I was amongst the least considerable, but amongst the most zealous advisers ; and it is not by the sort of peace now talked of that I wish it concluded. It would answer no great purpose to enter into the particular errors of the war. *The whole has been but one error.* It was but nominally a war of alliance. As the combined powers pursued it, there was nothing to hold an alliance together. There could be no tie of *honor*, in a society for pillage."

" They (the combined powers) were easily led to consider the flames that were consuming France not as a warning to protect their own buildings, (which were without any party wall, and linked, by a contiguation, into the edifice of France,) but as an happy occasion for pillaging the goods and for carrying off the materials of their neighbour's house. Their provident fears were changed into avaricious hopes. They carried on their new designs without seeming to abandon the principles of their old policy. They pretended to seek, or they flattered themselves that they sought, in the accession of new fortresses, and new territories, a *defensive* security." † * * *

"This error obliged them, even in their offensive operations, to adopt a plan of war, against the success of which there was something little short of mathematical demonstration. They refused to take any step which might strike at the heart of affairs. They seemed unwilling to wound the enemy in any vital part. They acted through the whole as if they really wished the conservation of the jacobin power; as what might be more favourable than the lawful government to the attainment of the petty objects they looked for. They always kept on the circumference; and the wider and remoter the circle was, the more eagerly they chose it as their sphere of action in this centrifugal war. The plan they pursued in its nature demanded great length of time. In its execution they who went the nearest way to work were obliged to cover an incredible extent of country. It left to the enemy every means of destroying this extended line of weakness. Ill success in any part was sure to defeat the effect of the whole. This is true of Austria. *It is still more true of England.*"*

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† Letters on Regicide Peace.

Of the war policy which led us to expensive and destructive expeditions to the West Indies and other places, he says—

"A remote, an expensive, a murderous, and, in the end, an unproductive adventure, carried on upon ideas of mercantile knight-errantry, without any of the generous wildness of Quixotism, is considered as sound, solid sense; and a war in a wholesome climate, a war at our door, a war directly on the enemy, a war in the heart of his country, a war in concert with an internal ally, and in combination with the external, is regarded as folly and romance."†

Similar disapprobation of the policy of our cabinet is expressed in the last political paper to which he gave his mind, dictated about two months before his death:—‡

"Nothing is more notorious than that I have the misfortune of thinking, that no one capital measure relative to political arrangements and still less that a new military plan for the defence of either kingdom (Ireland is included) in this arduous war, has been taken upon any other principle than such as must conduct us to inevitable ruin."

Mr. Windham constantly supported his views, but is understood to have been over-ruled by his colleagues in the Ministry.

An incident which occurred about this time is said to have given him as poor an opinion of Mr. Pitt's taste and virtù as he entertained of the measures of his Cabinet. The Grand Duke of Florence, pressed at this moment for money, and in dread of losing his magnificent collection of works of art without any equivalent by the rapid progress of the French in Italy, is reported to have offered to send them to this country as security for the loan of 200,000*l.* and to become permanently the property of England if the money should not be returned in ten years. This proposal the Minister declined; finding perhaps that he had already quite as many claimants upon his ways and means as he could well satisfy.

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* Letters on Regicide Peace.

† Ibid. vol. viii. p. 232, 8vo. ed.

‡ Burke's Works, vol. ix. p. 455.

A present of the "Letters on a Regicide Peace" were sent to His Serene Highness the Hereditary Prince of Wurtemberg, who was then in England, a short time before Mr. Burke quitted Bath, accompanied by the following note:—

"The author of the Letters which his kinsman will have the honour of laying before the Prince of Wurtemberg, would not have presumed to think them in the smallest degree worthy of being so presented, if the extraordinary condescension of His Serene Highness had not made it his duty to acknowledge his respectful sense of that condescension by such an offering to it as was alone in his power.

"He would have presented himself personally, according to His Serene Highness's gracious permission, signified to him through his friend Sir John Hippesley, to pay the homage which every one owes to the rank and virtues of the Prince of Wurtemberg, but he did not choose to affect his compassion by exhibiting to His Serene Highness the remains of an object worn out by age, grief, and infirmity, and condemned to perpetual retreat.

"The author is convinced that the favourable sentiments of the Prince in regard to those letters, are not owing to the talents of the writer, but to the cause which he has undertaken, however weakly, to defend, and of which His Serene Highness is the protector by situation and by disposition.

"The author hopes that if it should please God, by his all-powerful interposition, to preserve the ruins of the civilized world, His Serene Highness will become a great instrument in its necessary reparation; and that not only in the noble estates which comprise his own patrimony, but in the two great empires in which he has so natural and just an influence, as well as in the third,* which His Serene Highness is going to unite in interest and affection with the other two. In this he will co-operate with the beneficial and enlarged views of the illustrious house and its virtuous chief, who are on the point of having the happiness of his alliance. To the complete success of that alliance, public and domestic, some of the author's latest and most ardent vows will be directed!

"In the great task allotted to the Sovereigns who shall remain, His Serene Highness will find it necessary to exercise in his own territories, and also to recommend wherever his influence shall reach, a judicious, well-tempered, and manly severity in the support of law, order, religion, and morals; and this will be as expedient for the happiness of the people, as it will be to follow the natural bent of his own good heart, in procuring, by more pleasant modes, the good of the subject, who stands everywhere in need of a firm and vigorous, full as much as of a lenient and healing, government.

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* Great Britain;—in allusion to the projected marriage of the Prince with the Princess Royal of England.

"With sentiments of the most profound regard, His Serene Highness's most faithful and obliged servant, "EDMUND BURKE.

"Bath, 28th April, 1797."

The sagacity which had enabled Mr. Burke to penetrate the unhappy results in the train of the French Revolution, and the consequent energy and pertinacity with which he opposed it both in speaking and in writing, excited among many persons who had not the same length of view as himself, or indeed no conception whatever of the evils impending, a variety of conjectures as to the cause. At first they were merely surprised at the boldness of his predictions; but when he seemed determined to act upon them, by the breach which took place with his party for what they thought no more than speculative differences of opinion, they put him down as but a remove from insanity; an idea which was afterwards industriously circulated, and to which he partly alluded, after a vehement sally in the House of Commons, by a deliberate address to the chair in the words of St. Paul, "I am not mad, most noble Festus, but speak the words of truth and soberness." To an observation of his niece one day on the violence and absurd rumours by which he was incessantly assailed, he replied—"Some part of the world, my dear—I mean the Jacobin part of it—even think or affect to think that *I* am mad; but believe me, the world twenty years hence will, and with reason too, think from their conduct that *they* must have been mad." With those who found an interest in decrying his public exertions, the rumour was frequently renewed, particularly after the death of his son, when his grief was known to be extreme; and it sometimes had the effect even of imposing upon his friends, an instance of which occurred soon after the publication of the "Letter to a Noble Lord."

A report, under the guise of seeming precaution and secresy, reached them in town that he was afflicted with such total alienation of mind as to wander about his park during the day, kissing his cows and horses;—a circumstance which, if true, would be no more than is daily done by many honest and fond farmers and stable-boys, without any imputation upon them of a wandering of the wits; and which with Mr. Burke's warm affection towards the dumb as well as the speaking members of his establishment would have been no great matter for wonder, as he had in fact some favourite cows * who, to be more under his own eye, were put to graze near the house. A man of rank, however, left London instantly to learn the particulars, and was received in the usual manner of an old friend without his observing any perceptible change in his host. Not quite satisfied with this tacit contradiction, yet deeming it indecorous to ask questions on the subject, he adverted in conversation to the public circumstances of the moment, and to the probable train of any new studies by his host as affecting them, when the latter, unsuspicious of the drift of the visitor, produced some of the most eloquent and ably-argued passages from the Letters on Regicide Peace, which he was then writing. Convinced now of his information being erroneous, if not malicious, he hinted to Mrs. Burke the main purport of his journey, when he received the detail of the following singular and affecting incident, which probably formed the foundation for the story, though it had thriven marvellously in the journey from Beaconsfield to London.

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* A pretty piece, by Reinagle, delineating the house and grounds, represents Mr. Burke in front of the mansion patting a favourite cow, and his lady and a female friend walking at a little distance.

A feeble old horse, which had been a great favourite with the junior Mr. Burke, and his constant companion in all rural journeyings and sports, when both were alike healthful and vigorous, was now in his age, and, on the death of his master, turned out to take the run of the park for the remainder of his life at ease, with strict injunctions to the servants that he should neither be ridden nor molested by any one. While walking one day in solitary musing, Mr. Burke perceived this worn-out old servant come close up to him, and at length, after some moments spent in viewing his person, followed by seeming recollection and confidence, deliberately rested its head upon his bosom. The singularity of the action itself, the remembrance of his dead son, its late master, who occupied much of his thoughts at all times, and the apparent attachment and almost intelligence of the poor brute as if it could sympathize with his inward sorrows, rushing at once into his mind, totally overpowered his firmness, and throwing his arms over its neck he wept long and loudly.

His bodily health, however, though not his intellectual powers, had been for some time in a very declining state, until it terminated in a degree of general debility and loss of muscular power which rendered exertion and his usual degree of exercise impracticable. To this state of unexpected at least, if not premature, decay, his habits of application, literary pursuits, and former laborious Parliamentary exertions, no doubt tended, when his frame, shaken by the loss of his son, and his mind dispossessed of that buoyancy which his fond paternal hopes inspired, had no active power or principle left to counteract the usual inroads of infirmity. That loss he found it impossible to forget or to recover; and thenceforward constantly gave way to the most afflicting grief, and as the reader has observed, to the most pathetic lamentations. Those who did not know his disposition, fancied he sustained much annoyance from the numerous attacks of the partisans of the French opinions, who, by writing in a variety of periodical publications, possessed of course the strong holds of the press; and the letters on Regicide Peace proved a new stimulus to their renewed hostility, no less than eight or nine answers having appeared within a few weeks. No pain, however, was inflicted by these missiles; the writings of the lower class of opponents he rarely saw and never heeded; the attacks of the higher, in the way of argument, he answered and refuted; the mere abuse of either he despised. Of the latter, an instance occurred about this time which furnishes a pretty good sample of the *justice* with which he was commonly assailed.

A bookseller named Owen, who published the Letter to a Noble Lord, and was in the mean time entrusted with the MS. of the first two letters of Regicide Peace for publication, represented to some friends of their author who called upon him to account for the profits of the first work, that these had been surrendered to him by that gentleman as a gift. This story Mr. Burke had no other means of disproving than by his word to the contrary, which no one who knew him could for a moment disbelieve. Unwilling however to enter into a contest on such a matter with such a man, he put up with the loss. This was not all; for with the characteristic assurance of a pirate, Owen, as soon as he found that the manuscript of "Regicide Peace," was to be withdrawn out of his hands, published it on his own account, not only without the concurrence, but against the positive prohibition of the author. This impudent invasion of literary property he attempted, in a preface to the surreptitious copy of the work, to defend;* it was stopped, however, by legal interference; and as an appropriate conclusion to such an unprincipled proceeding, his defeated cupidity found

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* One of the ablest critical journals of the time, in speaking of the work, thus noticed the transaction:

"Before we proceed to consider the more important parts of these interesting and extraordinary productions, our attention is naturally attracted by the strange competition which seems to prevail between the genuine and the surreptitious editions. It affords the first instance, as far as we recollect, of a literary piracy vent in an abusive advertisement against "Edmund Burke, the Pensioner."

This person, whose representations it is difficult to credit, used to say that his men, who carried to Mr. Burke the proof sheets of his publications for correction, were so roundly rated for their mistakes, that at length none of them would venture to approach his house, particularly when any error greater than usual had been committed. He was therefore often obliged to take them himself. Dodsley's (his preceding publisher's) men told quite a different story. They represented him as affable and courteous (as was his custom indeed to the working class of people), taking particular pains to explain what he wished to be done, frequently ordering them liquor, and, on their withdrawing from the room, never permitting them to have the last bow.—They were accustomed to remark that though he was sometimes surrounded

being openly avowed and defended. Hitherto no property has been thought more sacred than that of an author in his unpublished works. * * *

"It appears, from Mr. Owen's own statement, that he was entrusted with a manuscript with a view to publication;—subject certainly to the pleasure of the author, and to every change of opinion which might take place in his mind. A trustee thus circumstanced had undoubtedly no more right to publish the work without the consent of the writer, than if the manuscript had been procured by breaking open the library at Beaconsfield. The defence set up by Mr. Owen not a little aggravates, in our opinion, the impropriety of his conduct. He informs us, that Mr. Burke, after having made him a present of the profits of his letter against the Duke of Bedford, sent some friends to demand an account of the sale of that publication. He does not tell us that he was actually compelled to refund these profits: he only affirms that he was *desired* to account for them;—and this he offers in defence of an acknowledged breach of trust."

by a large and apparently confused mass of papers, he could immediately put his hand upon any particular one which might be wanted.

Finding medical aid of little avail in restoring his health, Mr. Burke proceeded to Bath early in February 1797, for the benefit of the waters, which in early life had proved so beneficial. Here he continued for about four months confined to his bed or to his couch the greater part of the time; "My health," said he, in a letter dictated at the time, "has gone down very rapidly; and I have been brought hither with very faint hopes of life, and enfeebled to such a degree, as those who had known me some time ago, could scarcely think credible. Since I came hither, my sufferings have been greatly aggravated, and my little strength still further reduced; so that though I am told the symptoms of my disorder begin to carry a more favourable aspect, I pass the far larger part of the twenty-four hours, indeed almost the whole, either in my bed or lying upon the couch from which I dictate this."

The letter from which this extract is taken was written upon the affairs of Ireland, in reply to one addressed to him from that country; and though, as we see, indicted by snatches amidst pain and suffering, enforces with little diminution of force the same wise policy toward healing her internal divisions which he had always advised, but which still remains for some fortunate statesman to complete. He hints at something like the Union, by urging that the seat of her superior or *Imperial* politics should be in England; Ireland is hurt, he says, not by too much English, but by too much Irish influence,—by what he terms a small, bigotted, but more especially a selfish faction—" There is a great cry against English influence. I am quite sure that it is Irish influence that dreads the English habits."

" I think," it is added, adverting to the rebellious designs well known to be then in agitation, " that Great Britain would be ruined by the separation of Ireland; but as there are degrees even in ruin, it would fall the most heavily on Ireland. By such a separation Ireland would be the most completely undone country in the world; the most wretched, the most distracted, and, in the end, the most desolate part of the habitable globe. Little do many people in Ireland consider how much of its prosperity has been owing to, and still depends upon, its intimate connexion with this kingdom."

Of the recal of Lord Fitzwilliam, the source, it is to be feared, of most of the subsequent miseries which afflicted Ireland, he writes—

" Your mistake with regard to me lies in supposing that I did not, when his removal was in agitation, strongly and personally represent to several of his Majesty's Ministers, to whom I could have the most ready access, the true state of Ireland, and the mischiefs which sooner or later must arise from subjecting the mass of the people to the capricious and interested domination of an exceeding small faction and its dependencies."—It is added, that he had scarcely seen those Ministers since that representation—that they were then (1797) no friends of his, or of any one who held his opinions.—There is little doubt that Mr. Pitt felt jealous of his interference even in some points on which they did not materially differ; and on this business of the Roman Catholics, if we are to believe public fame, the Minister ultimately adopted his opinions. It appears likewise that the junior Burke took so much interest in the success of this question as to converse with his father about it not more than half an hour before his death.

The day before he quitted Bath, the following letter was dictated to Mrs. Leadbeater, and signed by his tremulous hand; it was among the last dispatched of his private letters:—

"My dear Mrs. Leadbeater,

"I feel as I ought to do your constant hereditary kindness to me and mine. What you have heard of my illness is far from exaggerated. I am, thank God, alive, and that is all. Hastening to my dissolution, I have to bless Providence that I do not suffer a great deal of pain. * * * * *

"Mrs. Burke has a tolerable share of health in every respect, except much use of her limbs. She remembers your mother's most good-natured attentions, as I am sure I do, with much gratitude. I have ever been an admirer of your talents and virtues, and shall ever wish most cordially for every thing which can tend to your credit and satisfaction. I therefore congratulate you very heartily on the birth of your son; and pray remember me to the representative of your family, who I hope still keeps up the school of which I have so tender a remembrance; though after so long an absence, and so many unpleasant events of every kind that have distracted my thoughts, I hardly dare to ask for any one, not knowing whether they are living or dead lest I should be the means of awakening unpleasant recollections. Believe me to be, with the most respectful and affectionate regards, my dear Mrs. Leadbeater,

" Your faithful friend,
" And very humble servant,
" Bath, 23d May, 1797. " EDMUND BURKE.

" P. S. Pray remember me to Mr. Leadbeater. I have been at Bath these four months to no purpose, and am therefore to be removed to my own house at Beaconsfield to-morrow, to be nearer to a habitation more permanent, humbly and fearfully hoping that my better part may find a better mansion."

There is something very touching in the mild and cheerful tone of this resignation to the Divine will, as well as in the allusions to his usual residence being so near to where he had determined should be his final resting-place (Beaconsfield Church); and the release of his spirit from its infirm and fragile earthly inclosure to a state of more perfect freedom. Of this letter the late Bishop of Meath justly observed in a communication to the lady to whom it is addressed; " The great scene on which Providence gifted and allotted him to move was now closing; and no record can ever be produced to mark the leading features of his character so strongly as that you possess in this letter. It shows him still cherishing the early affections of his heart, among the higher cares which the station he had attained imposed upon him; and after having controlled the destinies of the world, as *all now* agree he did, by his later writings, turning his last thoughts to the retired, unassuming daughter of the friend of his youth."*

To Beaconsfield, therefore, where he had enjoyed so many of the honours and comforts of life, he returned to die; for there is something of satisfaction to the human heart in breathing our last and in depositing our bones in the spot where we have spent the most honourable and useful part of our being; "It is so far at least," said he to some one just before quitting Bath, "on my way to the tomb, and I may as well travel it alive as dead."

While awaiting the event which was delayed for a month longer, he gave directions about the disposal of some of his papers, particularly desiring that the chief of those relating to the impeachment should be published, repeating the same opinion of the whole proceeding which he had always expressed. Public affairs occupied much of his thoughts to the last moment; "Never," said he, "succumb to the enemy; it is a struggle for your existence as a nation; and if you must die, die with the sword in your hand; but I have no fears whatever for the result; there is a salient, living principle of energy in the public mind of England which only requires proper direction to enable her to withstand this or any other ferocious foe; persevere therefore till this tyranny be overpast." To his own increasing weakness he submitted with the same placid and christian-like resignation, undisturbed by a murmur;

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* Poems by Mary Leadbeater, p. 323.

hoping, as he said, to obtain the divine mercy through the intercession of a blessed Redeemer, which, in his own words, "he had long sought with unfeigned humiliation, and to which he looked with a trembling hope."

Shortly before the fatal event took place, Earl Fitzwilliam communicated to Mr. Fox the information that it could not be far distant, and that gentleman having sent off a letter of inquiry on the subject to Mrs. Burke, received next day by express an answer couched in nearly the following terms. Whatever may be the opinion of the rigidity with which the subject of this note performed what he thought his duty, it is impossible not to admire the exalted principle which prompted it.

"Mrs. Burke presents her compliments to Mr. Fox, and thanks him for his obliging inquiries. Mrs. Burke communicated his letter to Mr. Burke, and, by his desire, has to inform Mr. Fox that it has cost Mr. Burke the most heart-felt pain to obey the stern voice of his duty in rending asunder a long friendship, but that he deemed this sacrifice necessary; that his principles remained the same; and that in whatever of life yet remained to him, he conceives that he must live for others and not for himself. Mr. Burke is convinced that the principles which he has endeavoured to maintain are necessary to the welfare and dignity of his country, and that these principles can be enforced only by the general persuasion of his sincerity. For herself, Mrs. Burke has again to express her gratitude to Mr. Fox for his inquiries."

A presentiment almost of the moment of the final summons from the world seemed to have prevailed with him; for several of the previous hours were employed in sending messages of affectionate remembrance to absent friends, in expressing his forgiveness of all who had in any manner injured or offended him, and in requesting the same from all whom his general or particular infirmities had offended. He recapitulated his motives of action in great public emergencies, his then thoughts on the alarming state of the country, "the ruling passion even in death," gave some private directions connected with his approaching decease, and afterwards listened attentively to the perusal, by his own desire, of some serious papers of Addison on religious subjects and on the immortality of the soul. These duties finished, his attendants, with Mr. Nagle of the war-office, a relation, were conveying him to his bed, when, indistinctly articulating a blessing on those around him, he sunk down and after a momentary struggle expired, July 9th, 1797, in the sixty-eighth year of his age. "His end," said Dr. Lawrence with great truth, "was suited to the simple greatness of mind which he displayed through life, every way unaffected, without levity, without ostentation, full of natural grace and dignity. He appeared neither to wish nor to dread, but patiently and placidly to await the appointed hour of his dissolution." "When I have revolved his various labours," writes the author of the Pursuits of Literature after an animated apostrophe to his memory, "I would record in lasting characters, and in our holiest and most honourable temple, the departed orator of England, the statesman, and the christian, Edmund Burke! "*Remuneratio ejus Cum Altissimo!*"

When examined after death, his heart was found to be preternaturally enlarged, affording some confirmation to the belief, if the common idea of the sympathy between the heart and the affections of the mind have any foundation in fact, that grief for the loss of his son killed him. An abscess had likewise formed in his side, which some of his medical attendants, among whom was Dr. Lynn, of Windsor, considered of a cancerous nature; and this, no doubt, formed the origin of that extreme debility of which he had latterly complained, and which had almost deprived him of the power of locomotion.

On the 15th of July he was buried, according to his own direction, in Beaconsfield church, in the same grave with his son and brother; the body being removed to the house of Mrs. Salisbury Haviland, in the town of Beaconsfield, the day before, for the convenience of a walking procession to the church, in which ceremony seventy members of the benefit society he had patronised, clad in mourning, preceded the corpse. "Soon after five o'clock," writes the antiquarian friend, whose communications have been already noticed, "an immense number of carriages had arrived in the town from London, and other places, which conveyed many distinguished members of both houses of parliament to pay the last mark of attention to the remains of this admired and celebrated man. I never witnessed a more imposing solemnity. It was not merely mourning in exterior; I knew many, more especially among the poorer classes, who felt, and showed that they felt, the loss of a friend. The pall was borne by

Sir Gilbert Elliot, afterwards Earl of Minto.
The Speaker of the House of Commons, now Ld. Sidmouth.
The Duke of Portland, KG.
Earl Fitzwilliam.
Duke of Devonshire, KG.
Earl of Inchiquin, afterwards Marquis of Thomond.
Mr. Windham.
Lord Chancellor Loughborough, afterwards Earl of Rosslyn.

"Few gentry of the surrounding country (as you have observed in your first edition) omitted to be in attendance on this occasion; and all the neighbouring pulpits, in alluding to his loss, paid that tribute to his private virtues* which none

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* An old Ballitore friend gave vent to very natural and sincere feelings on the loss of a friend, of whom the family had reason to be proud, in a piece from which the following is an extract:—

"ON THE DEATH OF EDMUND BURKE.

"'Tis o'er:—that lamp is quench'd in endless night,
Which Nature kindled at her purest flame;
By science fann'd,—if science could enhance
A genius from which science caught new rays:
No, 'tis not quench'd; the spark ethereal lives,
And it shall blaze along the track of time,
While we, who joy'd beneath the radiant beam,
Shall mix unheeded with our kindred clay.

That star is set, on earth to shine no more,
On which admiring nations wond'ring gaz'd:
That pow'rful stream of eloquence is dry,
Which with commanding force o'erwhelm'd the mind.
O! mourn for this, that from a barren world
Such excellence is fled! But, public care
Apart, in pensive solitude retired,
Lamenting friendship drops the silent tear.

There tender recollection calls to mind
The sweet benevolence which mark'd that mien;

whatever might be their political opinions, could well withhold." Mr. Fox proposed in the House of Commons that he should be interred in the national receptacle for illustrious talents, Westminster Abbey—an honour, however, which he was informed the terms in which the will of the deceased was couched, quite precluded. The writer has been informed from authority which he cannot question, that this fact was communicated to Mr. Fox previous to his proposition being made in the House, and the inference drawn from it by some of Mr. Burke's friends was, that as he knew the proposal could not be complied with, he introduced it to preserve a seeming show of liberality towards his memory which he did not in reality feel. This it is to be hoped is a mistake, or at least an erroneous conclusion. But it is true, that the reply of Mr. Fox to a letter of Mr. Nagle, who wrote off to him an account of the decease of Mr. Burke soon after it took place, and detailing some particulars of the conversation which preceded it, was a cold commonplace.

That mien which unadmiring who could view?
'Tis hers, with soft regret and pleasing pain,
To trace the social and domestic scene,
Where, ever shining, most of all he shone.
She saw the lib'ral hand, the healing balms
Dispense unboasting; and to haggard eyes,
Bedimm'd with poverty, and pain, and care,
The vivid rays of health, and hope restore.
Th' unvarying friendship, and the candid mind,
Prompt to forgive, and ready to atone,
Were his.—And O! how close the tender ties
Of father, husband, brother, bound his heart!"

In his will, a disinclination is expressed to unnecessary expence in his funeral, or to any posthumous honours beyond a simple inscription on the flag stone, or on a small tablet on the church wall. This restriction, though in accordance with his common unpretending habits, may be considered an unusual instance of self-denial in a public man; for though rank, and honours, and money may be refused by such persons when alive, there are, perhaps, none who would decline the monumental brass, and marble, and inscription which conveys to posterity some intimation that their merits were at least in part estimated and valued by their contemporaries. His reason for adverting to the subject he expresses to be "because I know the partial kindness to me of some of my friends; but I have had in my life but too much of noise and compliment."—The first clause in this testamentary document marks in a manner equally striking, his piety, and his attachment to his departed kindred: "According to the ancient, good, and laudable custom of which my heart and understanding recognize the propriety, I bequeath my soul to God, hoping for his mercy only through the merits of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. My body I desire to be buried in the church at Beaconsfield, near to the bodies of my dearest brother and my dearest son, in all humility praying that as we have lived in perfect unity together, we may together have a part in the resurrection of the just." His brother-in-law, Mr. John Nugent, he bequeaths to the protection of his political friends, in order to provide for his interests; and to his "entirely beloved and incomparable wife, Jane Mary Burke," is given the whole of his property in fee-simple; leaving a legacy to his niece, Mrs. Haviland, whose husband was alive at the time the will was drawn up, of 1000*l.*

On a tablet such as he desired in the south aisle of Beaconsfield church, is the following inscription:—

Near this place lies interred all
That was mortal of the
Right Honourable Edmund Burke,
Who died on the 9th of July, 1797, aged 68 years:

In the same grave are deposited the remains of his only son, Richard Burke, Esq., representative in Parliament for the Borough of Malton,

Who died the 2d August, 1794, aged 35:
Of his brother Richard Burke, Esq., Barrister at Law,
And Recorder of the City of Bristol,
Who died on the 4th February, 1794:
And of his widow Jane Mary Burke, who died on the 2d April,
1812, aged 78.*

From the intimate connexion of this family with that of Haviland, it may not be extraneous to introduce, from the authority of the same antiquarian friend, the mortuary notices upon the latter in Penn church; the words of the inscription upon the

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* A friend adds the family arms—

On a mural monument in the south aisle of Beaconsfield church—The arms of Burke impaling Nugent, sculptured in bold relief.

On a cross gules, the first quarter charged with a lion rampant sable—Burke impaling Nugent—Ermine, two bars gules—Nugent.

Crest—On a wreath, a mountain cat sejant guardant proper, gorged with a plain collar and chained or.

General, few as they are, but expressive, being the suggestion of Mr. Burke.

"Near the vestry door, on a tablet sculptured with military trophies and other appropriate emblems, by Hickey—the arms of Haviland—argent three embattled castles sable, impaling—Aston—argent—a fess and in chief three lozenges sable—inscribed—here rest the remains of General William Haviland, late Colonel of the 45th Regiment of Infantry.—An experienced and successful commander without ostentation. A firm friend without profession. A good man without pretence. He died Sept. 16, 1784, aged 67 years.—Also of Mary, relict of Wm. Townly Balfour, Esq. of the kingdom of Ireland, who departed this life August 2, 1789, aged 56 years—after having by her exemplary patience, pious resignation under a long and severe illness, impressed a genuine value upon those amiable qualities both of the understanding and of the heart, which made her the delight of all who knew her.—Also of Mary, wife of Samuel Ruxton Fitzherbert, Esq. of the kingdom of Ireland,—in whom simplicity of manners adorned a fine understanding—the love of her duty adorned the practice of it—and her affection was rendered inestimable by the sincerity and truth with which it was accompanied. She died Sept. 13th, 1786, aged 29 years. This monument, sacred to the memory of the best of husbands, an affectionate twin sister, and a dutiful daughter, is erected by their disconsolate survivor, Salisbury Haviland.

"Mrs. Salisbury Haviland herself was buried at Penn, October 6, 1807; and her unmarried sister, Abigail Aston, who had lived with her, was likewise interred Feb. 11th, 1814, aged 80 years.—And as the more humble friends of Mr. Burke's family must not be forgotten in this list of the departed, it may be mentioned that those old and faithful servants, Webster and his wife, repose near the remains of their master, in the cemetery at Beaconsfield; the former dying in December, 1810, the latter in August, 1818."

Mrs. Burke continued to reside at Butler's Court, visited and esteemed by all the friends of her late husband, among whom Mr. and Mrs. Windham were at all times particularly attentive, until her death, April 2, 1812, being previously in a great degree crippled in the use of her limbs through rheumatism. It was believed for some time that she was the author of a novel published in 1800, called "Elliott, or Vicissitudes of Early Life," but her friends universally disbelieve the fact, though the publisher of the work (Mr. Cawthorn) had some correspondence on the subject of it with a lady of that name residing at Beaconsfield, whom he understood to be the widow of Edmund Burke. The real author however was probably a Mrs. Burke, who published the "Sorrows of Edith," and some other tales.

Some time previous to her death, Mrs. Burke sold the mansion and estate of Butler's Court to her neighbour, James Du Pré, Esq. of Wilton Park, for 38,500*l.*, reserving the use of the house and grounds during her life, and for one year after her death. Mrs. Thomas Haviland, the niece of Mr. Burke, lived with her until her decease, under the promise of being made her heir, which however did not take effect; she received however a legacy of 5000*l.*, the remainder of the property being bequeathed to Mrs. Burke's own nephew, Mr. Nugent. Mrs. Haviland was a most amiable and deserving woman, not unworthy of her relationship to her celebrated uncle, who, as we have seen in his letters, was always lavish in her praises.* She retired to live at Brompton for the benefit of her health, and died there in March, 1816, at the age of forty-six.—Her son, Thomas Haviland Burke, Esq. of Lincoln's Inn, in consequence of Mr. Burke's brothers dying unmarried, becomes the lineal representative of the family, and as such has assumed the name and arms of his uncle, no other person standing in the same degree of relationship to that distinguished man. The library, and all the tokens of regard and admiration which he had received from the good and great of the world, devolved, with the bulk of the property, to Mr. Nugent. The pieces of sculpture which ornamented the house were sold by auction by Christie, and some of them now grace the British Museum.

An old and costly carved chair of particular workmanship, which had been for many years used in the House of Commons, was, upon some alteration there, displaced and presented to Mr. Burke. It was sold among his other remains, and purchased by Peregrine Dealtry, Esq. of Bradenham House, and after his decease in 1814 was presented by his sisters to Dr. Parr, who preserved it as one of the great ornaments and curiosities of Hatton. On his death, in March 1825, it was transferred by bequest to Dr. John Johnstone, of Birmingham, in whose possession it now is.

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* Having occasion to consult an eminent surgeon in London (Sir C. B.), after being a widow, he fell in love with her, and being extremely rich, made an offer of a splendid settlement along with his hand, which however, from some scruples as to the propriety of second marriages, she thought proper to decline.

Butler's Court was burnt down on the morning of the 23d April, 1813, having been let to a clergyman named Jones, for the purposes of a school, in whose occupation the accident took place. It is remarkable that Cliefden, the seat of his intimate friend the Marquis of Thomond, only five miles distant, shared the same fate a few years before, being burnt down in May 1795. Cliefden is celebrated by Pope; and there his present Majesty passed some of his younger days. This house as well as Butler's Court were built upon the plan of Buckingham House, with a grand centre connected to wings by corridors.

CHAPTER VII.

His Person.—Manners.—Habits.—Conversational Powers and Sallies.—Private Character.—Ardour of Temper and reputed Irritability.—Contemporary Opinions formed of him.

In adverting to some of the public and private characteristics of this celebrated man, there will be found so much to commend, that simple justice may run the risk of being deemed indiscriminate panegyric. Against this the writer is solicitous to guard himself by giving, in addition to any estimate of those merits he may himself form, the opinions of others more competent perhaps to convey a correct judgment upon the matter, and who were well acquainted with the original, as well as with the facts they respectively state, and several of whom being opposed to him on political topics will not be suspected of bestowing undeserved praise.

To give a just representation of a great political character, whose life has been spent in the constant contention inseparable, in England at least, from the calling he pursues, is a laborious indeed, but not an impracticable undertaking. To give such a representation as shall be universally acceptable, is impossible. A statesman is at all times to the mass of the world, an object of suspicion during, or near to, the time in which he lives. If there be two ways of construing his conduct, the unfavourable side is commonly taken; yet the contrary impression would be unquestionably nearer to the truth, for of all public men he is the most interested in doing, or in aiming to do, right, whether he looks to the continuance of present power, or to the possession of that which every man would have, if he could, namely, posthumous reputation. It is the duty, therefore, of the biographer or historian diligently to attend to this; to give even to a questionable character an attentive and impartial, if not a favourable consideration. This is the business not merely of common charity but of strict justice; for there is, notwithstanding such constant exclamations against poor human nature, much more of good among mankind than we are always willing to acknowledge. Many statesmen, therefore, however unpopular or imprudent in their politics, have not been without their public as well as private virtues. But, on the other hand, where no crimes are charged, where no suspicion attaches, and where even adversaries have been compelled to render praise, the task of the narrator is as easy as it is agreeable. Such is the case with Mr. Burke. Judged therefore by this standard, he will be acknowledged to be not merely a great man, but an eminently good one, in whose character or conduct there will be found little which the most devoted admirer need be afraid to probe, little of human infirmity over which an enemy can triumph; for his errors, whatever they were, chiefly arose from pushing the passions of virtue to excess.

In person, he was five feet ten inches high, erect, well-formed, never very robust; when young, expert in the sports of his country and time, active in habits suited to his years until his last illness, and always, it scarcely need be added, particularly active in mind, having nothing of what he called "that master-vice, sloth" in his composition. His countenance in early life possessed considerable sweetness, and by his female friends was esteemed handsome. At a later period, it did not appear to be marked, particularly when in a state of quiescence, by that striking expression which from the well-known qualities of his mind many persons expected to see; but the lines of thought were evident, and when excited by discussion there was an occasional working of the brow, occasioned partly by being near-sighted, which let the attentive observer into the secret of the powerful workings within. From this defective state of vision, he almost constantly, from about the year 1780, wore spectacles. An Irish literary lady of talent—and ladies are possibly the best judges of these matters—who enjoyed the pleasure of his acquaintance, thus describes him at the age of 50 in a letter to the present writer:

"He was the handsomest man I recollect to have seen; his stature about six feet, well-made, portly, but not corpulent. His countenance was such as a painter would find it difficult precisely to draw (and indeed I always understood they complained of the difficulty); its expression frequently varying, but always full of benevolence, marked, in my opinion, by strong intellect and softened by sensibility. * * * A full length portrait of him hangs in the Examination Hall of Dublin University; the figure, features, and complexion are like his, but the countenance as a whole by no means does him justice. * * * He was a most delightful companion, and had the art of rendering the timid easy in his company. His conversation, which was often serious and instructive, abounded at other times with wit, pleasantry, and good humour; whatever subject he spoke upon, and he spoke upon all, he excelled in, as if it had formed a particular study; and his language, though sometimes considered ornamented on public occasions, was distinguished by a fascinating simplicity, yet powerful and appropriate beyond what I can tell."—Another lady, with whose husband, who was a relation, he occasionally spent a day in Lamb's Conduit-street, in London, describes him nearly in the same terms—"His address frank, yet dignified; his conversation interesting and various; and, particularly to female society, playful and amusing in a high degree."—The best picture of him is that painted by Reynolds in 1775, from which the engraving which accompanies this volume is taken; the original is in the possession of Earl Fitzwilliam, being bequeathed to him by Mrs. Burke. That which hangs in the Examination Theatre of the University of Dublin was taken at a much later period of life, the face shorter than in Sir Joshua's, with something of contemplative severity in the expression. A better likeness, as is commonly said, is that modelled in wax, and finely finished by T. R. Poole, who was medallion modeller to his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, but it should be remembered that it was taken at a much later period of life than the picture by Sir Joshua.

Of the bust by Hickey, which has been noticed as having been recently presented by his nephew,

T. Haviland Burke, Esq., to the British Museum, the history is somewhat curious. It appears that her late Majesty Queen Caroline, when Princess of Wales, professing great admiration of Mr. Burke, wrote to Mrs. Burke at Butler's Court, requesting permission for a cast to be taken from the bust in her possession, for a collection, which she was then making of the celebrated men of the British nation. Mrs. Burke, naturally desirous to have all due honour done to her late husband, and conceiving that this memorial of him could not be better or more safely placed than in royal custody, offered to her Royal Highness's acceptance a present of the bust itself. The offer was accepted. No such collection however as had been stated, was ever formed. At the sale of her Royal Highness's effects at Connaught House, the bust was found buried amid some household rubbish, and along with other things, received a place as an article of sale in the catalogue of the auctioneer. In this situation Mrs. Thomas Haviland heard of it, and gave a commission to have this relic of her uncle purchased privately, but the sum demanded being exorbitant, it was thought better to wait for the public sale. Here there was a strong contest for it with Turnerelli, the sculptor, who seemed extremely anxious for the possession of the bust, upon which he evidently put a high value; and to him, in consequence of a mistake of the agent employed by Mrs. Haviland, it was knocked down. A dispute arising, however, it was again put up. Turnerelli was in the mean time informed that as a relation of Mr. Burke was desirous of possessing the object of contention, let him bid what sum he might, he would be outbid, and finding this to be the case, after one or two attempts, he gave up any further effort, and it was procured for comparatively a small sum.

Like Mr. Fox, Mr. Burke was somewhat negligent in common dress, being latterly distinguished by a tight brown coat, which seemed to impede all freedom of motion, and a little bob-wig with curls, which, in addition to his spectacles, made his person be recognized by those who had never previously seen him, the moment he rose to speak in the House of Commons. Though an ardent lover of poetry, which he prized at every period of life, and more especially of that of Milton * in particular as furnishing the grandest imagery in the language; yet, contrary to the common idea that love for poetry and music go together, he had little ear for the latter; Mr. Fox, it is known, had none at all; and it has been remarked as a singular coincidence that the ears of Mr. Pitt and Dr. Johnson should have been equally tuneless.

From some little peculiarity in his gait, which has been already noticed, Sir Joshua who, as an artist, had an eye to these things, used to say that it sometimes gave him the idea of his having two left legs. He

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* Like Johnson, Goldsmith, and many others, he had a very poor opinion, as is evident in his letter of criticism on the arts to Barry, of Ossian; besides which, three-fourths at least, he said, of the productions ascribed to that ancient, he considered to be forgeries, so entirely, that the writer had not even tradition to build upon, though in others no doubt he had made use of local and romantic tales. "It was only a trick of cool Scotch effrontery," he once said, "to try the precise range of English gullibility; nothing but the blind nationality of Scotchmen themselves gave the least countenance to the imposture."

received people frequently in his library and dressing-room; and here when busily occupied on important subjects, which during much of his parliamentary life was the case, he was accustomed to dictate letters and answers with facility. With writings intended for the press he was on the contrary fastidious, and took great pains with them by frequent and careful revision, whenever he aimed at making a strong impression; in these, therefore, there was nothing of carelessness. Blottings and erasures were of course numerous, so as to render his manuscripts frequently difficult to decipher to any one not accustomed to the task. The matter itself of his compositions was rarely altered, but the arrangement and illustration of it, and the turn of the sentences, not unfrequently. Habit, however, had rendered the most perspicuous modes of expression so familiar to him, that in this respect his most-hastily written and confidential communications offer little for censure.

His address in private life possessed something of a chivalrous air—noble, yet unaffected and unreserved, impressing upon strangers of every rank, imperceptibly and without effort, the conviction of his being a remarkable man. "Sir," said Johnson, to exemplify this, "if Burke were to go into a stable to give directions about his horse, the ostler would say, 'We have had an extraordinary man here.'" His manner in mixed society was unobtrusive, surrendering at once his desire to talk to any one who had, or who thought he had, the least claim to be heard: "Where a loud-tongued talker was in company," writes Cumberland, "Edmund Burke declined all claims upon attention." When Johnson one evening seized upon every topic of discourse that was started, and an auditor, after separating, remarked to Mr. Burke that he should have liked to hear more from another person, meaning him, "Oh no," replied the latter, "it is enough for me to have rung the bell to him." To the lower class of people, it has been remarked, he was always affable. When a youth, who was on a visit to him at Beaconsfield, treated the respectful salutation of a servant contemptuously, Mr. Burke called him aside, and terminated a remonstrance with him on the subject by saying, "Never permit yourself to be outdone in courtesy by your inferiors." Of literary society he was extremely fond, preferring it, more perhaps than his own political interests demanded, to that which was merely distinguished by rank and fashion; but after the deaths of his older friends he did not cultivate it as before.

His conversational powers partook of the same fulness of mind which distinguished his eloquence; they never ran dry; the supply for the subject always exceeded the demand. "Burke," said Johnson, "is never what we call hum-drum; never in a hurry to begin conversation, at a loss to carry it on, or eager to leave off." On many other occasions also the moralist celebrated the excellence, of "his talk," and though in some degree of a different character from his own, it was not less instructive, and little less forcible. Among friends, his sallies of thought were frequently of a serious cast, sometimes philosophical, sometimes moral, the elevation of the sentiment commonly forming a contrast to the unaffected simplicity with which it was delivered. A profound reflection, or great moral truth, often slipped from him as if by accident, without seeming to have cost any trouble in the elaboration ; while Johnson's throes in the delivery of bright thoughts were obvious, and he took care, by his loud and authoritative manner, to *hammer* the offspring into his hearers. What we have of the sayings of Burke make us anxious for more ; he has himself indeed drawn up the line-of-battle of his genius to the public gaze in his works, but who does not regret that he had no Boswell in attendance to note down the transient sallies of his social hours—to collect and arrange the flying squadron of his brain ?

When Croft's Life of Dr. Young was spoken of as a good imitation of Johnson's style, " No, no," said he, " it is not a good imitation of Johnson ; it has all his pomp without his force ; it has all the nodosities of the oak without its strength ; it has all the contortions of the Sybil without the inspiration." Speaking of the new sect of philosophers of 1793, " These fellows," said he, " have a wrong twist in their heads, which ten to one gives them a wrong twist in their hearts also."

When told of Mr. Godwin's definition of gratitude in Political Justice, " I should take care to spare him the commission of that vice by never conferring upon him a favour."—" Swaggering paradoxes," he added, "when examined, often sneak into pitiful logomachies."

Of reasoning upon political theories, he observed, " The *majors* make a pompous figure in the battle, but the victory of truth depends upon the little *minor* of circumstances."

When a present of wine to the Literary Club was almost expended, he playfully observed, "I understand the hogshead of claret which this society was favoured with by our friend the Dean (Barnard) is nearly out: I think he should be written to, to send another of the same kind. Let the request be made with a happy ambiguity of expression, so that we may have the chance of his sending *it* also as a present." Dr. Johnson was voted secretary, or punningly, dictator for the occasion. "Were I your dictator," said the moralist, "you should have no wine. It would be my business, *cavere ne quid detrimenti Respublica caperet*, and wine is dangerous. Rome was ruined by luxury."—"If you allow no wine as dictator," said Burke, "you shall not have me for your master of horse."

Like Johnson, he preferred London as a place of constant residence, to avoid the inquisitorial remarks common in a country town. Boswell observes on this, "Mr. Burke, whose orderly and amiable domestic habits might make the eye of observation less irksome to him than to most men, said once very pleasantly in my hearing, 'Though I have the honour to represent Bristol, I should not like to live there; I should be obliged to be so much *upon my good behaviour*.'"

On the question whether a man would live his life over again if it were in his power, he used a very ingenious argument. "Every man (said he) would live his life over again; for every man is willing to go on and take an addition to his life, which, as he grows older, he has no reason to think will be better, or even so good as what has preceded."

He had a very poor opinion of the merits, literary or moral, of the "Beggar's Opera." "There is nothing exhibited in that piece (said he) which a correct man would wish to see, and nothing taught in it which any man would wish to learn."

At table his habits were temperate, preferring the lighter to the stronger wines, in opposition to Johnson's gradation of liquors, "claret for boys, port for men, brandy for heroes;" "then," said he, "give me claret, for I like to be a boy and partake of the honest hilarity of youth." At a later period of his life, when exhausted by mental exertion or attacks of indigestion arising from close application, he was accustomed to take large quantities of water as hot as it could be drunk; "*warm* water," said he, "sickens, but *hot* water stimulates." In allusion partly to this habit, the writer of a piece in imitation of "Retaliation," who applies the different kinds of wine, as Goldsmith had done dishes, to his characters—as port to Johnson, champaign to Garrick, burgundy to Reynolds, thus says of the orator:

> To Burke a pure libation bring,
> Fresh drawn from pure *Castalian* spring;
> With civic oak the goblet bind,
> Fit emblem of his patriot mind;
> Let *Clio* as his taster sip,
> And Hermes hand it to his lip.

An amiable feature in Mr. Burke's disposition was a dislike to any thing like detraction, or that insinuation against private character too often tolerated even in what is called good society, which, without amounting to slander, produces nearly the same effects. When this occurred in his own house by any one with whom he was familiar, he would directly check it, or drop a hint to that effect; "Now that you have begun with his defects," he would say, "I presume you mean to finish with a catalogue of his virtues;" and sometimes said, though mildly, "censoriousness is allied to none of the virtues." When remarks of this kind were introduced by others whom it might have been rude to interrupt, he took the part of the accused by apologies, or by urging a different construction of their actions, and, as soon as he could, changed the subject; exemplifying the advice he once familiarly, but wisely, gave to a grave and anxious acquaintance, who was giving vent to some querulous lamentations, "Regard not trifles, my dear Sir; live pleasantly."

A dispute occurring with the lord of the manor in which his property at Beaconsfield was situated, about the right of ownership in a number of oak trees which stood outside of his park-paling, it was referred, the value being considerable, to the decision of a court of law. So confident was his adversary of gaining the cause, that he had directed the bell-ringers to be in readiness, the moment the news arrived, to celebrate his victory. The result, however, proved directly contrary to what he expected; and Mr. Burke's servants, thinking their master entitled to the same demonstration of village joy, upon his suceess, were proceeding to express it, when hearing what was going on, he gave peremptory orders to desist.—"It is bad enough to quarrel with a neighbour," said he, "without attempting to triumph over him;" and added, when the intention of the other was urged, "What *he* might have done is of no consequence;—it is necessary to consider what *I* ought to do."

Johnson, who denied him scarcely any other talent or merit, would not admit that he possessed wit; he always got into the mire, he said, by attempting it. Wilkes, however, who certainly was no mean judge of this faculty, thought differently; so did Boswell; so did Mr. Windham; so did Mr. Courtenay, himself a wit, who thus commences an ode addressed to Mr. Malone, from Bath—

Whilst you illumine Shakspeare's page,
And dare the future critic's rage,
Or on the past refine;
Here many an eve I pensive sit,
No Burke pours out the stream of wit,
No Boswell joys o'er wine.

Dr. Robertson, the historian, maintained he had a great flow of wit, as his surprising allusions, brilliant sallies of vivacity, and novel and ingenious conceits, exhibited daily in his conversation and speeches in Parliament, furnished evidence. Dr. Beattie entertained the same opinion. Alluding to the disinclination of Johnson to admit the possession of this talent in men to whom the world generally allowed it, he says, in one of his letters, "Even Lord Chesterfield, and *what is more strange, even Mr. Burke,* he would not allow to have wit." Sir Joshua Reynolds likewise agreed in the opinion of his fertility in wit, observing, "That he has often heard Burke say in the course of an evening ten good things, each of which would have served a noted wit (whom he named) to live upon for a twelvemonth."

Nearly the same opinion was entertained and expressed by many successive Houses of Commons, and more especially by those members, and they were no small number, who smarted under its lash—and among whom there were frequent exclamations against what they termed " the wantonness of his wit and the licentiousness of his eloquence,"—the former a quality which, as an auxiliary in debate, when under prudent management, and subservient to something more solid, he found very effective; Lord North was in this respect his only competitor, and Mr. Sheridan afterwards his only superior. Mr. Pitt, when he had no more effectual answer to give to his keener sallies, which was not unfrequently the case in the war of words they had so long carried on, used to term them, " the overflowings of a mind, the richness of whose wit was unchecked for the time by its wisdom ;" and an able anonymous writer, during the American war, among other distinguishing characteristics of his mind, particularly points to his " sarcastic wit."

For Johnson's remark, however, there was some foundation in occasional fits of punning, to which he gave way round the social table among intimate friends, in order, as he said, to amuse the ladies; and these were sometimes so indifferent as to draw down smart rallies from his niece, Miss French, with " Really, uncle, that is very poor." " There now, you have quite spoiled it; we expected something better ; " but there was some little malicious pleasure even in his failures ; for the less credit he gained by his efforts, the more he was accustomed to smile at the disappointment of those who were in expectation of hearing something very fine. This punning spirit may be exemplified by the following conclusion of a note to Mrs. Haviland, in allusion to the military title of her husband:—"In order that I may turn over a new leaf with you, in wishing you, and all with you, in *General*, and in *particular*, a thousand and one happy years—when may every one of them, and even the odd one, be as pleasant, but a little more real than the Thousand and One Arabian Entertainments! This we all cordially wish. Mrs. Balfour is well, to all appearance, of all rheumatism. May you all be well of all complaints. God bless you. Your's ever, my dear Madam, Sirs, young and middle aged—for self, wife, and son, &c.

"EDMUND BURKE."

His main strength in conversation, however, did not lie, like Johnson's, so much in cutting repartee, as in a more playful cast of jocularity, though by no means destitute of pungency; sometimes quaint and humorous, sometimes coarse enough, frequently of classical origin or allusion, as several of the specimens preserved by Boswell evince, but without the biting severity of the lexicographer which he characterized on one occasion very promptly and happily in reply to Dr. Robertson the historian, who observing that Johnson's rebukes were but righteous oil which did not break the head; "Oil!" replied Mr. Burke, "oil of vitriol!"

When his friend the Rev. Dr. Marlay was appointed to the Deanery of Ferns, "I do not like the name," said he, "it sounds so like a *barren* title."

Alluding to livings, he observed that Horace had a good one in view, in speaking of—*Est modus in rebus sunt certi denique fines;* which he translated, "a modus in the tythes and fines certain."

When some one inquired whether the Isle of Man was worth a journey thither to see, "By all means," said Mr. Burke, "the proper study of *mankind* is *man*."

Boswell, when trying to give a definition of man, called him a *cooking* animal; "Your definition is good," replied Mr. Burke; "I now see the full force of the common proverb, 'there is reason in the roasting of eggs.'"

When the same industrious chronicler was describing some learned ladies assembled around, and vying in attention to a worthy and tall friend of their's (Johnson), "Ay," said Mr. Burke, "like maids round a may-pole."

In allusion to the chairing of Mr. Wilkes, he applied to it Horace's description of Pindar's numbers, "*Fertur nŭmeris lege solutis*," altering the second word to *humeris; he* (Wilkes) *is carried on shoulders uncontrolled by law.*

Conversing with a young gentleman from Ireland of better birth and capacity than fortune, who was venting his indignation against the purse-proud arrogance of some Scotch trader who had, according to his account, made his money chiefly by dealing in *kelp*, and who, in consequence of his wealth, looked down with affected superiority on *gentlemen* by birth and by accomplishments, "Aye," replied Mr. Burke, "he thinks

'Et genus et virtus nisi cum re vilior alga est.'"

A much higher feature of his character than wit, was a fervent and unfeigned spirit of piety, cheerful but humble, unallied to any thing like fanaticism, and expressive of a deep dependance on the dispensations of Providence, traces of which are to be found in the letters of his boyhood; for having been early, by his own statement, taught to study the sacred volume with reverence, an intimate acquaintance with its lessons and phraseology rested on his mind, and may be seen in his subsequent writings and speeches, sometimes to a fault. In the great trial of his fortitude, the loss of his son, the most affecting lamentations are accompanied by confessions of his weakness, the vanity of his desires, and, whatever he might wish or think to the contrary, the superior wisdom of the Divine decree, in disposing of him as he thought proper. He preferred the Church of England to all others, as on the whole the most pure and estimable; like Johnson, he viewed the Roman Catholics with more favour than many others were inclined to show them; and going still further than him, professed strong regard for the dissenters, from which, if he ever swerved for a moment, it was in the alarming situation of the country in 1792, when the leaders of that body sunk the character of ministers of religion in that of a violent and very questionable order of politicians.

His moral character stood wholly unimpeached by any thing that approached to the name of vice. "The unspotted innocence, the firm integrity of Burke," said Dr. Parr, "want no emblazoning, and if he is accustomed to exact a rigorous account of the moral conduct of others (*in public* *matters*), it is justified in one who shuns not the most inquisitorial scrutiny into his own." Unlike some of his greatest contemporaries, he made neither the bottle nor the dice his household deities ; he had no taste for pursuits that kill time rather than pass it ; " I have no time," said he, " to be idle." In the country, the mornings, often at an early hour, were devoted to agricultural pursuits, with a zeal and intelligence which soon enabled him to assume and deserve the name of a practical farmer. In town they were usually appropriated to study, literary composition, or political business, bending his way, in the afternoon, to the House of Commons, whence he returned on the termination of business, sometimes to literary society, more frequently fatigued and occasionally fretted, to the soothing comforts of his own fire-side. " No wonder," said he, jocularly, on some occasions, " that my friend Charles (Fox) is so often more vigorous than I in the House, for when I call upon him in my way thither, jaded by the occupations of the day, there he is, just out of bed, breakfasting at three o'clock, fresh and unexhausted, for the contentions of the evening."

The same affectionate disposition which Mr. Shackleton remarked in the boy, continued through life in the domestic relations of the man ; his duties there might be said, in a peculiar degree, to be his pleasures ; and one of the best proofs of it was the cordial attachment and unanimity prevailing in a large family connexion, of which he formed the centre. He never forgot an old friend or an obligation, often lamenting that his short tenure of power precluded the possibility of giving them, as he could have wished, substantial proofs of his regard. His philanthropy, which frequently drew praises from his political antagonists, was often appealed to by numerous begging letters, sometimes requiring a large portion of the morning to peruse and to answer; and his exertions for some of the superior class of applicants, such as literary men and others, were occasionally repaid with gross ingratitude. His hospitality was always greater than his means, and at no time did he appear to more advantage than when doing the honours of his house and table.

The Rev. Mr. Crabbe, who was well acquainted with him, adds his testimony to that of many others —" Of his private worth, of his wishes to do good; of his affability and condescension; his readiness to lend assistance where he knew it was wanted; and his delight to give praise where he thought it was deserved." "All know," continues he, "that his powers were vast, his acquirements various, and I take leave to add, that he applied them with unremitted attention to those objects which he believed tended to the honour and welfare of his country; but it may not be so generally understood that he was very assiduous in the more private duties of a benevolent nature; that he delighted in giving encouragement to any promise of ability, and assistance to any appearance of desert. To what purposes he employed his pen, and with what eloquence he spake in the senate, will be told by many, who yet may be ignorant of the solid instruction as well as the fascinating pleasantry found in his common conversation among his friends; and his affectionate manners, amiable disposition, and zeal for their happiness, which he manifested in the hours of retirement with his family."

Partaking something of the temperament of his country, his resentments were warm and open, though placable, but the instances in which they were exhibited were few in number, for, during a long and most tempestuous public life, he conciliated the esteem of his chief opponents, nor is it remembered that he was engaged with any of them in one hostile personal squabble. It has been said, with gross perversion of the truth, that he bore ill-will toward Mr. Fox after their quarrel. So far is this from being the case, that though freely condemning his politics, he spoke of him otherwise among his private friends with affection, by saying, "he was a man made to be loved; there was not a particle of gall in his composition;" and it has been shewn that the nature of his politics alone prevented a renewal of as cordial a friendship as had ever existed between them. He valued himself, he said, for the regard that gentleman had once professed for him, and felt proportional regret on its cessation.

It may be true, perhaps, that he occasionally gave way to starts of irritability, but these were so transient as to be scarcely exhibited before they were subdued. A single instance of this kind occurring in public is commonly sufficient to fix the charge perpetually on him who displays it. Such was the case with Mr. Burke. Many stories are therefore told of him which are wholly untrue, and those that possess a shade of truth are much exaggerated. The following, which has been lately afloat in the magazines and newspapers, may be taken as a sample :—

"The irritability of Burke is well known, and was strongly exemplified on many occasions in Hastings's impeachment, in his conduct not only towards his opponents, but also towards his colleagues. On one occasion, Mr. Michael Angelo Taylor had nearly fallen a victim to this infirmity. Burke had put a question, the only one, it is said, which he had ever put that was unexceptionable, both in substance and in form. Mr. Law, the late Lord Ellenborough, one of Hastings's counsel, objected to it, and was stating the grounds of his objection, when, perceiving Mr. M. A. Taylor entering the manager's box, he congratulated the House that the candour and legal experience of the learned manager, meaning Mr. Taylor, would at once induce him to admit that such a question could not be put consistently with those rules of evidence with which his learned friend was so eminently conversant. Upon which, Mr. Taylor, who had never before been so respectfully referred to as an authority, (and who was worked upon like the crow in the fable, complimented on his singing), coming forward, requested the learned counsel to restate the question, which Mr. Law having done, Mr. T. instantly observed that it was impossible to contend that it was admissible. On this, Mr. Burke, forgetting every thing but his question, seized Mr. Taylor by the collar, exclaiming, 'You little villain! put him in irons, put him in irons!' dragged him down, and had almost succeeded in throttling him, when Mr. Fox came in to his rescue. The scene is by no one more pleasantly described than by Mr. Michael Angelo Taylor himself."

To analyze critically the truth of this story, made up, probably, to divert a dinner company, or coined, perhaps, by one of those ingenious gentlemen who is asked to dinner for the sake of his stories, may be akin to that misapplication of labour, which would "break a butterfly on the wheel." But as there are in it some pretensions to authenticity, a few words may settle that matter with the reader.

We are, in the first place, told that Mr. M. A. Taylor had nearly *fallen a victim* to this alleged infirmity of Burke, which, in other words, means that the latter, not having the fear of God or of the Peers before his eyes, was on the point of committing murder, or manslaughter, in Westminster Hall. This, indeed, looking to the light way in which the matter is treated, may only be an attempt by the ingenious author at that striking figure of speech termed hyperbole; and considering that the provocation to this violence was so heinous, and that the nobility of the land, the judges, lawyers, and spectators were silent witnesses of it, this rhetorical effort at accurate description must be considered as very happily judged.

We next learn that the question put by this eloquent almost-homicide, was unexceptionable; but then it is insinuated, with equal gravity, and no doubt correctness, that it was the only one among innumerable questions that was so. Yet, even to this unexceptionable among the exceptionables, the lawyer objects. Whether this ingenious and vigorous satire be directed against Mr. Burke or Mr. Law, the reader will at once detect its accuracy and point.

Mr. Taylor is then introduced upon the scene for the humorous purpose, (putting the contemptuous simile of the crow out of the question) of making himself appear

> "———————— A tool
> "That knaves do work with, call'd a fool."

This is a particularly happy hit of the author of the story, considering that he makes Mr. Taylor himself the narrator of his own vanity and folly.

Worse, still worse, remains behind. Poor Mr. Taylor is no sooner represented as flattered into an absurdity by Mr. Law, than he is ludicrously figured to us as buffetted (we presume out of it) by Mr. Burke; he is seized by the throat—called "a little villain"—dragged about—almost strangled, and, finally, rescued by Mr. Fox: but in what light poor Mr. Taylor viewed this novel species of persuasion from the great orator of the age, or whether he resented it, does not appear. No doubt, if this story-teller be believed, he considered it as a capital joke; and his taste in this way not being fastidious, and his resentments not strong, he continued to follow the train of his leader, in the expectation, perhaps, of experiencing a few more such practical jokes, for the pleasure of retailing them to his friends. How the offended dignity of the Peers relished this joke, is likewise left to conjecture. We must suppose that their lordships were asleep; the judges deeply occupied in consultation; the lawyers turned aside from looking at the managers to the perusal of their papers; the historian of the trial asleep; and the spectators all blinded by the dust raised by the scuffle —for none of them heard or saw anything of this new display of manual rhetoric.

Not one of the least merits of Mr. Burke was in being so perfectly free from any thing like envy or jealousy of contemporary talent, as often to surrender to others during the first sixteen years of his Parliamentary life, the reputation of constitutional measures, which he not only suggested, but chiefly achieved. The Nullum Tempus act, the Jury bill, the first relief to the roman catholics, and many others, were of this class. It may appear strange, or a very unusual effort of generosity, that any public man who had to work up-hill every step of his way to eminence should do this to a certain degree in his own wrong by withholding from himself to bestow upon others that which was calculated to ensure honest and undisputed fame; but the fact was *he* always looked to the success of his party, while *others* regarded that which was chiefly personal to themselves. He alludes, with evident satisfaction, to this liberality of spirit in the retrospect of his political career contained in the Letter to a Noble Lord. In speaking of the popularity and lead he had acquired in the troubled period, from 1780 to 1782, "when wild and savage insurrection quitted the woods, and prowled about our streets in the name of reform;" he says—

"I know well enough how equivocal a test this kind of popular opinion forms of the merit that obtained it. I am no stranger to the insecurity of its tenure. I do not boast of it. It is mentioned to show not how highly I prize the thing, but my right to value the use I made of it. I endeavoured to turn that short-lived advantage to myself into a permanent benefit to my country.

"Far am I from detracting from the merit of some gentleman, out of office, or in it, on that occasion. No!—It is not my wish to refuse a full and heaped measure of justice to the aids that I receive. I have, through life, been willing to give every thing to others, and to reserve nothing for myself, but the inward conscience that I had omitted no pains to discover, to animate, to discipline, to direct the abilities of the country for its service, and to place them in the best light to improve their age, or to adorn it; —this conscience I have. I have never suppressed any man; never checked him for a moment in his course by any jealousy, or by any policy. I was always ready to the height of my means, (and they were always infinitely below my desires) to forward those abilities which overpowered my own:—he is an ill-furnished undertaker who has no machinery but his own hands to work with."

The allusions to Mr. Fox, in this passage, are obvious; and to this discipline, teaching, and prompting there is no question but he owed much of his fame: he himself had the candour to acknowledge, on four different occasions, in the House of Commons, that to these he owed nearly it all.

The greatest defect of Mr. Burke approached so near to what is often a virtue, that it is sometimes difficult to draw the line between them. It was a heat, or ardour of temperament, which, by meeting with much opposition in pursuing a measure that he had once satisfied himself was right, sometimes became zeal, sometimes irritability, sometimes obstinacy, sometimes passion, in its support. "Exquisite powers," writes Lord Buchan, in a Letter to Bonomi the artist, in allusion to this characteristic of Mr. Burke, "has its root in exquisite sensibility."

And this peculiar sensitiveness of genius has been so often noted one of its marked features, that perhaps we are scarcely at liberty to lament what appears to possess some occult connexion with its very excellence. Frequent observation proves, that some of the strongest minds are under the dominion of very powerful feelings and passions, and by the stimulus which these supply to the reason, enable it to accomplish much which minds equally great, without such strong excitements, would be unable or afraid to attempt. Thus, the mild spirit of Melancthon never could have done the work of Luther, Calvin, or Knox. Thus Mr. Fox, or Mr. Pitt, in all probability, could not have excited the public mind on the American war as Mr. Burke by the variety of his powers and passions excited it. It is almost certain that they could never have rendered popular the trial of Mr. Hastings, as was done at least for a time by him: It is unquestionable that it was not within the range of the powers of either, singly, to influence the nation as he influenced it on the question of the French Revolution. Men constituted as he was, uniting extraordinary acquirements with invincible zeal, perseverance, and genius, are peculiarly cut out by nature for important and trying exigencies. He has a remark himself somewhere, that " a vigorous mind is as necessarily accompanied with violent passions as a great fire with great heat." "Strong passion," said he, at another time, and the observation displays much knowledge of character, " under the direction of a feeble reason feeds a low fever, which serves only to destroy the body that entertains it. But vehement passion does not always indicate an infirm judgment. It often accompanies, and actuates, and is even auxiliary to a powerful understanding; and when they both conspire and act harmoniously, their force is great to destroy disorder within and to repel injury from abroad." "No revolution (in public sentiment), civil or religious," says Sir Gilbert Elliott, writing in 1758 to the historian Dr. Robertson, "can be accomplished without that degree of ardour and passion which in a later age will be matter of ridicule to men who do not feel the occasion, and enter into the spirit of the times."

Useful as this peculiar frame of mind is—and nothing great was ever accomplished without it—it is frequently prejudicial when carried into the discussion of ordinary affairs, or the common routine of opposition in the House of Commons, as Mr. Burke himself now and then experienced. It sometimes led him to express undue warmth and positiveness in matters of inferior moment, and by seeming to master his temper, was also believed by those who did not know him well, to interfere with the due exercise of his judgment. To many who neither saw so far nor so clearly into the tendency of measures as himself, it had the appearance of arrogance; to many, of dictation, obstinacy, or intractability. It gave rise not unfrequently to illiberal surmises that he must have some personal interest in matters which he urged with so much heat and pertinacity; and impaired the effect of his eloquence on the opposite benches of the body whom he had to address, by an opinion, however unfounded, that his views at times sprang from momentary passion or impulse rather than from mature deliberation. Convinced in his own mind of being right, he was somewhat impatient of not being able to convince others equally soon; he did not perhaps make sufficient allowance for inferior understandings, for duller apprehensions, for more defective information; or always consider that as even obvious moral truths are of slow progress among the mass of mankind, so political truth, as involving a greater variety of interests, is received with still more caution, particularly from those who happen not to possess political power, and who are therefore suspected of aiming only to acquire it. He was early informed of this peculiarity in his public temperament, and expresses an intention to amend it so far back as 1777: the passage, which is remarkable for advising Mr. Fox to beware of the same error, is contained in the letter written to him in Ireland —" I remember some years ago when I was pressing some points with great eagerness and anxiety, and complaining with great vexation to the Duke of Richmond of the little progress I made, he told me kindly, and I believe very truly, that though he was far from thinking so himself, other people could not be persuaded I had not some latent private interest in pushing these matters, which I urged with an earnestness so extreme and so much approaching to passion. He was certainly in the right. I am thoroughly resolved to give both to myself and to my friends less vexation on these subjects than hitherto I have done;—much less indeed. If *you* should grow too earnest, you will be still more inexcusable than I was. Your having entered into affairs so much younger ought to make them too familiar to you to be the cause of much agitation." On another occasion he adverted in the House to this distinction of character—" an earnest and anxious perseverance of mind which with all its good and all its evil effects is moulded into my nature." In private life it was never offensive and rarely observable, except when employed in pushing the interests of his friends or in the duties of humanity and charity.

In examining a few of the more marked features of his mind, there will be found belonging to him peculiarities almost contradictory in their nature; qualities which, if not inconsistent with each other, have been so rarely conjoined in the same person as to be thought inconsistent. Some of the most striking are, a variety in his powers almost unbounded, a brilliancy which imposes upon the imagination, a solidity which convinces the judgment, a fancy singularly excursive in pursuit of striking and alluring figures, and which may be termed the presents of genius to the service of persuasion and truth, and a wisdom which when employed in the affairs of mankind was rigidly pinned down to the plain and straight-forward, and that which was founded upon experience and practice. This is so unusual a combination that perhaps another instance is not to be found. He not merely excelled all his contemporaries in the number of his powers, but some in the peculiar excellence belonging to each; as for instance, we find him a tolerable poet even while a boy, a penetrating philosopher, an acute critic, and a judicious historian when a very young man; a judge of the fine arts, whose opinions even Reynolds valued, a political economist when the science was scarcely known in this country, or known to very few, a statesman often pronounced one of the wisest that ever adorned our country, an orator second to none of any age, a writer of extraordinary powers on every subject, and on politics the first for depth and eloquence in our language; and in addition to these, possessed of a vast and multifarious store of knowledge of which all who had any intercourse with him, whether friend or opponent, have spoken in terms of strong admiration and surprise. Like the celebrated Berkeley, Bishop of Cloyne, whose philosophy regarding matter he had once set himself the task to refute, there was nothing useful of which he could be said to be ignorant.

The testimony borne to his talents and acquirements during so many years by Dr. Johnson, a few of which have been repeated in this work, and more are to be found in Boswell's amusing volumes, would alone stamp the fame of any man. Even while travelling in the Hebrides this favourite topic of the great moralist was not forgotten: " I do not," said he to Boswell, alluding to what he considered inferior minds who had acquired a lead they did not deserve in public affairs, " grudge Burke being the first man in the House of Commons, for he is the first man everywhere."

Lord Thurlow, after so many years of political bickerings, and whose judgment in consequence was not likely to be biassed by undue partiality, spoke a language not less strong, when in a private company where there was some allusion to the comparative merits of the three great orators and statesmen of the age, he observed,—“ The name of Burke will be remembered with admiration, when those of Pitt and Fox will be comparatively forgotten.”

The celebrated Mirabeau was known to speak of him more than once with great applause, and what was more singular, delivered in the National Assembly on several occasions large passages, with some trivial alterations from the printed speeches and writings of Mr. Burke, as his own; on being reproached with this once, he admitted the fact; apologising for it by saying that he had not had time to arrange his own thoughts on some of the many topics he was obliged to discuss, and that in no other productions could he find such an union of argument and eloquence.

As coming from the pen of the scarcely less celebrated opponent of Mirabeau, the following possesses much interest; it was at first attributed to Peltier, but was really written by M. Cazalés;—“ Died at his house at Beaconsfield, with that simple dignity, that unostentatious magnanimity so consonant to the tenour of his life and actions, the Right Honourable Edmund Burke. There never was a more beautiful alliance between virtue and talents. All his conceptions were grand, all his sentiments generous. The great leading trait of his character, and that which gave it all its energy and its colour, was that strong hatred of vice which is no other than the passionate love of virtue. It breathes in all his writings; it was the guide of all his actions. But even the force of *his* eloquence was insufficient to transfuse it into the weaker or perverted minds of his contemporaries. This has caused much of the miseries of Europe; this has rendered of no effect towards her salvation the sublimest talents, the greatest and rarest virtues that the beneficence of Providence ever concentred in a single character for the benefit of mankind. But Mr. Burke was too superior to the age in which he lived. His prophetic genius only astonished the nation which it ought to have governed."

Mr. Windham, who was his devoted friend and admirer, often expressed similar sentiments, and in the same spirit as the concluding sentence of the preceding passage, wrote in a private letter about this time, what as a Minister it would not perhaps have been quite so decorous towards his co-adjutors to say in public: "I do not reckon it amongst the least calamities of the times, certainly not among those that affect me least, that the world has now lost Mr. Burke. Oh! how much may we rue that his councils were not followed! Oh! how exactly do we see verified all that he has predicted."

On the first allusion to the French Revolution in 1790, Mr. Fox said that "his reverence for the judgment of his right honourable friend was unfeigned; for that if he were to put all the political information he had gained from books, all that he had learned from science, and all that the knowledge of the world and its affairs had taught him, into one great scale, and the improvement he had derived from the conversation and instruction of his right honourable friend in the other, the latter would preponderate." Some time afterwards he repeated that "from him he had learned nearly all his political knowledge." At the moment of their disunion he observed, "that however they might differ on present matters, he must still look to his honourable friend as his master;" adding upon the same occasion, "He must again repeat that all he ever knew of men, that all he ever read in books, that all his reasoning faculties informed him of, or his fancy suggested to him, did not impart that exalted knowledge, that superior information, which he had acquired from the lessons of his right honourable friend. To him he owed all his fame, if fame he had any. And if he (Mr. Fox) should now or at any time prevail over him in discussion, he could acknowledge his gratitude for the capability and pride of the conquest in telling him—

'Hoc ipsum quod vincit id est tuum.'"

At the moment of proposing his interment in Westminster Abbey, he again repeated the same acknowledgments in terms which, in the words of a Member in attendance, "drew tears from every one present who had any feelings at all, or could sympathize in the excellence of the great genius then before them, or with the still greater excellence of the genius who had departed."

When some one expressed an opinion that Burke was sometimes only a sophist, though an extraordinarily eloquent one, Mr. Fox is said to have immediately remarked, that he entertained a very different opinion. "The eloquence of Mr. Burke," continued he, "is not the greatest of his powers: it is often a veil over his wisdom: moderate his more vehement sallies, lower his language, withdraw his imagery, and you will find that he is more wise than eloquent: you will have your full weight of the metal, though you should melt down the chasing."

"Burke," said Mr. Gerard Hamilton (whom Mr. Grattan pronounced a great judge of men and things), at the period of their greatest coolness, "understands every thing but gaming and music. In the House of Commons I sometimes think him only the second man in England; out of it he is always the first."

The unknown author of the 'Pursuits of Literature,' who seems to have no other point of agreement with Dr. Parr, agrees with him at least in rapturous eulogy of Mr. Burke, scattered through a variety of passages of his work, in verse and in prose, in Greek, in Latin, in English, and all of them in no ordinary terms, 'First in the East,' 'Regent of Day,' 'Luminary of Europe,' 'great and unequalled man,' "who opened the eyes of the whole nation to the systems of internal destruction and irreversible misery which awaited it, and who only displayed them to confound and wither them by his powers," applying to him the praise of Paterculus to Cicero—

> "Animo vidit, ingenio complexus est, eloquentia illuminavit."

"Let me," says Dr. Parr, "speak what my mind prompts of the eloquence of Burke—of Burke, by whose sweetness Athens herself would have been soothed, with whose amplitude and exuberance she would have been enraptured, and on whose lips that prolific mother of genius and science would have adored, confessed, the Goddess of Persuasion." "Who is there," adds the same learned critic, "among men of eloquence or learning more profoundly versed in every branch of science? Who is there that has cultivated philosophy, the parent of all that is illustrious in literature, or exploit, with more felicitous success? Who is there that can transfer so happily the result of laborious and intricate research to the most familiar and popular topics? Who is there that possesses so extensive yet so accurate an acquaintance with every transaction recent or remote? Who is there that can deviate from his subject for the purposes of delight with such engaging ease, and insensibly conduct his readers from the severity of reasoning to the festivity of wit? Who is there that can melt them if the occasion requires with such resistless power to grief or pity? Who is there that combines the charm of inimitable grace and urbanity with such magnificent and boundless expansion?"

Mr. Curwen, whose political opinions have been already noticed, thus writes of him on viewing Ballitore, the scene of his early acquisitions in knowledge. "The admiration, nay astonishment, with which I so often listened to Mr. Burke gave an interest to every spot connected with his memory, and forcibly brought to my recollection the profundity and extent of his knowledge, while the energy, warmth, and beauty of his imagery captured the heart and made the judgment tributary to his will. As an orator he surpassed all his contemporaries, and was perhaps never exceeded."

Another Parliamentary contemporary and supporter previous to the French Revolution, but who was so incurably bitten by that event that he has never since recovered a sober understanding, acknowledges amidst several gross misrepresentations, "The political knowledge of Mr. Burke might be considered almost as an Encyclopædia; every man who approached him received instruction from his stores." "Learning," writes a contemporary of a different stamp, but who nevertheless never voted with him except during the period of the coalition Ministry, "waited upon him like a hand-maid, presenting to his choice all that antiquity had culled or invented; he often seemed to be oppressed under the load and variety of his intellectual treasures. Every power of oratory was wielded by him in turn; for he could be during the same evening pathetic and humorous, acrimonious and conciliating; now giving a loose to his indignation and severity; and then almost in the same breath calling to his assistance ridicule, wit, and mockery."

"As an orator," adds another adversary on the question of revolutionary politics, "notwithstanding some defects, he stands almost unrivalled. No man was better calculated to arouse the dormant passions, to call forth the glowing affections of the human heart, and to 'harrow up' the inmost recesses of the soul. Venality and meanness stood appalled in his presence; he who was dead to the feelings of his own conscience was still alive to his animated reproaches; and corruption for a while became alarmed at the terrors of his countenance.

Had he died during the meridian of his fame and character he could scarcely have been considered second to any man either of ancient or modern times." The *meridian of his fame and character* means, in this writer's opinion, before he assailed the French Revolution, and persons of similar sentiments all speak the same language; but the rest of the world who think differently and more justly, deem his exertions upon that subject the climax of his reputation and powers.

" His learning is so various and extensive," said the Rev. Thomas Campbell, author of the History of Ireland, " that we might praise it for its range and compass, were it not still more praise-worthy for its solidity and depth. His imagination is so lively and so creative, that he may justly be called the child of fancy; and therefore his enemies, for even he is not without them, would persuade us, that his fancy overbears his judgment. Whereas, this fine frenzy is, as it ought to be, only a secondary ingredient in the high composition of a man, who not only reflects honour on his native country, but elevates the dignity of human nature. In his most eccentric flights, in his most seemingly wild excursions, in the most boisterous tempest of his passion, there is always a guardian angel which rides in the whirlwind, and directs the storm. His grand characteristic is genius, and ruling faculty is judgment, though certainly not of that cold kind which the law would call prudence; but his reason is enlightened by intuition, and whilst he persuades as an orator, he instructs as a philosopher.

" A nobleman of the highest station and abilities in England, though of an opposite party in politics, when he heard the petty minions of the day decry his powers, stopped them short, and said, ‘Come, come, hold your tongue, the next age could not know that there was oratory in this, if Edmund Burke had not printed his speeches.’ And Dr. Johnson, generally a niggard in panegyric, speaking of that parity of talents which is generally distributed to the sons of men, has been heard to say, that during his acquaintance with life, he knew but two men who had risen considerably above the common standard; the one was Lord Chatham, the other was Edmund Burke.”

“His eloquence,” said Mr. Wilberforce on another occasion—and it was rarely their lot to agree on political matters—“had always attracted, his imagination continually charmed, his reasonings often convinced him. Of his head and of his heart, of his abilities and of his humanity, of his rectitude and of his perseverance, no man could entertain a higher opinion than he did.”

A critic of considerable repute thus indirectly alludes to the oratory of Mr. Burke, in analysing that of Mr. Grattan—

“It is not the roundness, the *ore rotundo* of Mr. Pitt; it is not the simple majesty of Mr. Fox; it is not the brilliancy of Mr. Sheridan. Occasionally we caught a tint, a feature of resemblance to Mr. Burke, but he has not that commanding figure and manner, that volume of voice, that superabundant richness and fertility of fancy, that vast grasp and range of mind which Mr. Burke possessed beyond all other created beings.”

To these might be added some hundreds of similar eulogies of his character and powers from inferior men; language indeed has been nearly exhausted in characterizing them; and the terms "a vast storehouse of knowledge," "an illustrious man," "a wonderful man," "an unequalled man;" "a mighty mind," "an all-knowing mind," "a boundless mind," "an exhaustless mind," "the most consummate orator of the age," "the greatest orator and wisest statesman of modern times," occur to the reader of nearly every work, untainted by party spirit, in which he is mentioned.

In this enumeration, the character drawn of him by his intimate friend Dr. French Lawrence must not be omitted. After mentioning his death sometime in the night of July 8, 1797, he says—

"His end was suited to the simple greatness of mind which he displayed through life, every way unaffected, without levity, without ostentation, full of natural grace and dignity: he appeared neither to wish nor to dread, but patiently and placidly to await the hour of his dissolution. He had been listening to some Essays of Addison's, in which he ever took delight; he had recommended himself, in many affectionate messages, to the remembrance of those absent friends whom he had never ceased to love; he had conversed some time with his accustomed force of thought and expression on the awful situation of his country, for the welfare of which his heart was interested to the very last beat; he had given with steady composure some private directions, in contemplation of his approaching death; when, as his attendants were conveying him to his bed, he sunk down, and, after a short struggle, passed quietly, and without a groan to eternal rest, in that mercy which he had just declared he had long sought with unfeigned humiliation, and to which he looked with a trembling hope!

"Of his talents and acquirements in general, it is unnecessary to speak. They were long the glory of his country, and the admiration of Europe; they might have been (had it so consisted with the inscrutable counsels of divine Providence!) the salvation of both. If not the most accomplished orator, yet the most eloquent man of his age; perhaps second to none in any age: he had still more wisdom than eloquence. He diligently collected it from the wise of all times; but, what he had so obtained he enriched from the vast treasury of his own observation; and his intellect, active, vigorous, comprehensive, trained in the discipline of true philosophy, to whatever subject he applied it, penetrated at once through the surface into the essential forms of things.

"With a fancy singularly vivid, he least of all men, in his time, indulged in splendid theories. With more ample materials of every kind than any of his cotemporaries, he was the least in his own skill to innovate. A statesman of the most enlarged views—in all his policy he was strictly practical; and in his practice he always regarded, with holy reverence, the institutions and manners derived from our ancestors. It seemed as if he had been endowed with such transcendant powers, and informed with such extensive knowledge, only to bear the more striking testimony, in these days of rash presumption, how much the greatest mind is singly inferior to the accumulated efforts of innumerable minds in the long flow of centuries.

"His private conversation had the same tincture with his public eloquence. He sometimes adorned and dignified it with philosophy, but he never lost the charm of natural ease. There was no subject so trivial which he did not transiently illuminate with the brilliancy of his imagination. In writing, in speaking, in the senate, or round the table, it was easy to trace the operations of the same genius.

"To the Protestant religion, as by law established, he was attached from sincere conviction; nor was his a barren belief, without influence on his moral conduct. He was rigid in the system of duties by which he regulated his own actions; liberal in construing those of other men; warm, but placable; resenting more the offences committed against those who were dear to him, than against himself; vehement and indignant only where he thought public justice insulted; compassionate to private distress; lenient to suffering guilt. As a friend, he was, perhaps, too partial to those he esteemed; over-rating every little merit, overlooking all their defects; indefatigable in serving them; straining in their favour whatever influence he possessed; and, for their sakes more than his own, regretting, that during so long a political life, he had so seldom bore any share in power, which he considered only as an instrument of more diffusive good. In his domestic relations he was worthy, and more than worthy he could not be, of the eminent felicity which for many years he enjoyed; a husband of exemplary tenderness and fidelity; a father fond to excess; the most affectionate of brothers; the kindest master; and, on his part, he has often been heard to declare, that in the most anxious moments of his public life, every care vanished when he entered his own roof.

"One, who long and intimately knew him, to divert his own sorrow, has paid this very inadequate tribute to his memory. Nothing which relates to such a man can be uninteresting or uninstructive to the public, to whom he truly belonged. Few, indeed, whom the divine goodness has largely gifted, are capable of profiting by the imitation of his genius and learning; but all mankind may grow better by the study of his virtues." *

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* Of Dr. Lawrence himself, for a long period the valued acquaintance of Mr. Burke, the reader may not be displeased to see the following, printed in the newspapers soon after his decease:—

"To the formidable catalogue of eminent deceased characters, who have successively been snatched from society within the last few years, is now to be added the name of French Lawrence, LL.D., and Member of Parliament for Peterborough, who fell the victim of rapid and unexpected decline. He expired on Monday, Feb. 27, 1809, in the vigour of his days, and the maturity of his talents.

"Distinguished as a civilian, a political philosopher, a poet, and a senator, his death must, without partiality to him individually, be considered as a public bereavement. By the operation of a vigorous intellect, combined with persevering application, Dr. Lawrence soon rose into high professional estimation. He became, at length, politically known by the active part which he took, during 1784, in favour of Mr. Fox's memorably contested election for Westminster. His career in the senate was highly respectable. His sentiments, which he not unfrequently delivered in the House of Commons, were the result of deep thought, couched in striking and nervous language, and were always re-

Much the greater part of these praises were bestowed by persons who knew him, not merely in the casual bustle of political life, but in moments when the statesman was sunk in the social acquaintance; and this is the most valuable species of testimony; for it sometimes happens that a nearer view of

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spectfully received. If he seldom attempted to enliven legislative discussions with the scintillations of wit, it was because he felt the gravity of the senatorial character to be utterly incompatible with ostentatious displays of this kind.

" Estimated as a poet and wit, however, the Rolliad and Probationary Odes, of which the preface and notes to the former were chiefly from his pen, have established his reputation beyond the chances of mutability. He was likewise the writer of several election ballads, which reflect credit on his genius, and of various little poems, inserted in the poetical register, which sufficiently evince the extent and versatility of his talents.

" As one of the executors of the late Edmund Burke, it became the province of Dr. Lawrence, in discharge of the trust so reposed in him, to superintend the posthumous publications, together with the other literary property, of his illustrious friend. Amongst these works, the conducting of the original Annual Register, in the composition of which Dr. Lawrence had long assisted, came, on the death of Mr. Burke, entirely under his direction. Of the volumes immediately subsequent, the prefaces, and some parts of the History of Europe, were written by Dr. Lawrence. It is greatly to be regretted, that his other avocations, multifarious and embarrassing, prevented him from extending his credit as an author.

" Endeared to his friends by his virtues, valued by the public for his writings, and esteemed by his compatriots as a senator, he is exempted from the common oblivion of men; as one whose talents and whose virtues will linger some time longer in recollection. Considered with reference to his political views and feelings, Dr. Lawrence was one of those who seem to have been happily removed from those public evils which are evidently impending. He partook of nobler views, and lived in better times. He was one of the last great men of the old school!"

public men diminishes much of that wonder we feel at a distance. On the contrary it appears that intimacy with Mr. Burke increased it. His more private friends, who happened to be little or not at all connected with public affairs, and who had the best possible opportunities of probing and exploring the man, loved him the best, and prized him the most. The same feeling existed among his relations. No man, it has been said, is a hero to his valet de chambre, and from the same feeling of familiarity, few men, perhaps, however great in the estimation of the world, carry the impressions of greatness into the bosoms of their own families. But even here, where most unveiled and unreserved, he had the fortune to secure both profound attachment and respect; and the following anecdote proves that he contrived to belie the proverb just quoted. When some one was congratulating his old servant Webster on the honour of serving so good a master and so great a man—"Yes, Sir," said the faithful attendant, "he is a great man;—he knows and does every thing but what is mean or little." Mr. Windham used to say that this was one of the finest panegyrics upon him which could be uttered.

Richard his brother, and William Burke, themselves able men, his companions from youth, the partakers of his fortunes, the participators in many of his studies, who knew, if any men could know, the value of his mind, and the labours bestowed upon its culture, looked up to him with a feeling of veneration. Sentiments of this kind frequently appear in the letters of both. At an early period of his public life, Richard, writing to a friend in Ireland, thus concludes an eulogium upon him—"Whatever he has is his own; he owes the public nothing, whatever the public may owe to him. It is but just to his character to say that for honour, for integrity, and for ability, no man ever stood higher in public estimation in this kingdom; and I will add, but it is to you that I write, no man ever better deserved it." William Burke, writing about the same time, speaks the same language. Though no relation of Edmund, this gentleman was so much attached to him from boyhood, and so proud of the connexion, that, in the language of a friend of the family, "he would have knocked any man down who had dared to dispute the relationship."

The respectful admiration of his son equalled that of his brother and friend. During the last visit to Ireland in 1786, when Mr. Shackleton, after listening attentively to some ingenious and profound observations of his father, turned aside soon afterwards with his son and remarked in conversation, "he is the greatest man of the age;" "He is," replied the son, with filial enthusiasm, and a very near approximation to the truth, "the greatest man of any age." Dr. Parr, we have seen, was of the same opinion. Lord Thurlow's estimate of him has just been given. Dr. Lawrence's sentiments are on record; while a few living, and a host of dead friends, concurred in the same tone of admiration.

Nothing perhaps more strongly exhibits the homage paid to his vigour of mind than the influence it gave him over the most eminent men with whom political connexion brought him into close contact: over the Marquis of Rockingham, a man of sound talents unquestionably; over Mr. Dowdeswell, and all the ablest of that party; over the Duke of Portland; over Mr. Fox; over Mr. Windham; over all his private friends without exception; over the most distinguished of the Old Whig party now living; over several of the coalition Ministry; in a considerable degree over Mr. Pitt and his colleagues in 1792, at least as much as the habitual pride, and jealousy of all political talents entertained by the Minister, would permit; and, on nearly all the great questions he embraced, eventually over the whole nation. If it require a strong understanding to gain a leading influence over even the ignorant and the weak, what must that be which subjects to its dominion the enlightened, and the powerful, and in talents not merely the great but the vast?

CHAPTER VIII.

His eloquence.—His writings.—His leading principles as a Statesman.—Mr. Burke, Mr. Pitt, Mr. Fox.

Of the conception which we have been taught to entertain of what a great and commanding orator should be; whose moral character, as the ancients endeavour to impress upon us, ought to be pure; whose knowledge must be universal; whose genius serves to animate and adorn his knowledge; whose language flows at will; whose delivery is required to be impressive; whose powers of reasoning and imagination are equally strong; whose presence of mind rarely deserts him; whose readiness to combine all these qualities, or to draw upon each separately, as circumstances may require, is unlimited—there is no man, perhaps, in the history of English oratory, who comes near to Mr. Burke. It has been remarked with some truth, that his powers, if shared out, would have made half a dozen of good orators. It must at least be regarded as an uncommon coincidence that he should unite in an eminent degree nearly every one of the requisites which the critics of the classic days of Rome point out as necessary to the character. Others of the great political names of our country possess only two or three of the qualities here enumerated. Mr. Pitt and Mr. Fox, for instance, equalled him in vigour of reasoning, in judgment, and in fluency; Mr. Sheridan in coolness, promptitude and wit; Lord Chatham had the advantage in a bold, and indeed overpowering delivery, and perhaps, Lord Bolingbroke also in some degree; Charles Townshend in a peculiar parliamentary skill in seizing the favourable moment to push a subject, and in the adaptation of his powers to the point at issue, as well as to the present temper of the House, whatever temper that might be; but none of them possessed the combination peculiar to Mr. Burke. Neither had any of these eminent persons his originality of thought, his force of language, his striking phraseology, or that inexhaustible fertility upon every topic which constitutes the soul of eloquence, and which, when his opponents had little else to find fault with, they urged against him as a defect. He would seem therefore to have been cut out for a great orator, partly by some natural gifts, and partly by having grounded and reared himself upon the model which the Augustan age of literature recommends. And this must have been done at an early period of life; led to it probably not so much from any sanguine expectation of ever becoming the character which he admired, as by the expected duties of the profession he at first contemplated, or by that latent instinct which, without knowing precisely whither it tends, so often propels and guides in the pursuits of life.

A distinction may be made, and perhaps hold good, between a great orator and a debater. It has been said, that in the latter respect Mr. Fox acquired the superiority over all men. No speaker certainly was ever heard with more consideration by those opposed to him, or, perhaps, with so much partiality by those whom he led in the House of Commons, as well from his unquestioned talents and popularity, as from the strong attachment of the latter to his person, which scarcely any other political leader has had the good fortune to secure, or to secure in the same degree. It will, nevertheless, be difficult to point out where Mr. Burke's presumed inferiority lay. In information, in wisdom upon all great occasions, and in variety of talents to secure them a favourable reception from his hearers, he had no equal; in readiness and vigour no superior; and he was accused of being frequent and fertile to a fault.

After all, however, it may be doubted whether this great reputed dexterity in debate of Mr. Fox, be any just criterion of the highest order of intellect, or whether his style which commonly accompanied it was of the highest style of oratory—that style which is not merely effective in the British Senate, but which commands the admiration of all men, of all countries, as the perfection of the art. Judged by this standard he comes much short of Mr. Burke. A good debater, although a character almost wholly English, as there was scarcely any such (their speeches being chiefly written) among the ancients, and little resembling him in the rest of Europe at the present day, is more of a mechanic, perhaps, than he is willing to acknowledge. His range is commonly narrowed, his aim bounded by local or temporary circumstances, which, though calculated to meet some petty interest or emergency of the moment, often become an obstacle to a very wide expansion of mind; he may be said to move within a moral circle, to work in a species of political tread-mill; and his art has been attained, as in the cases of Mr. Fox, Mr. Pitt, and others, and it is but fair to calculate, may be again acquired, at an age when other and much higher faculties remain still unfolded. A good debater, therefore, may in a great measure be made. The power of a great and commanding orator, in the highest acceptation of the term, must, like that of the poet, be chiefly born with him.*

The oratorical style of Mr. Burke is not only of the very highest order, but it possesses the first characteristic of genius—originality. We have nothing that is very similar to it, and little, perhaps, equal to it, in our language, though of its nature and power, its vigour and variety, its novelty of thought, and intellectual brilliancy which flashes athwart every subject, and transmutes all objects that it meets with into auxiliaries to his main purpose, a very inadequate idea can be conveyed by description, and no specimen can do it justice. When Johnson was asked whether Mr. Burke resembled Tullius Cicero? "No, Sir," was the reply, "he resembles Edmund

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* Since this was in the press, the opinion of a great genius, recently given to the world, seems to corroborate that of the present writer.

Lord Byron has observed, that no parliamentary speaker of our own day gave him the idea of a great orator. Grattan, he said, was near to it. Fox he only regarded as a debater, and between such a character and a great orator there is no more resemblance, he adds, than between an *improvisatore*, or a versifier, and a great poet. Lord Chatham and Burke, were, in his opinion, the only English orators who approached perfection.——If the contest for superiority lies between these two great men, it will be no difficult matter, perhaps, to decide to whom the preference will be ultimately given.

Burke." Taken as a whole, however, his manner partakes of the grandeur of the eloquent Roman, with more of richness, of knowledge, of masculine energy, and altogether a greater reach of mind than he displays; though with less of chastity, of elaborate elegance, or of methodical arrangement, which, however, we have no right to expect in speeches which, unlike those of the great ancient, were not polished into perfection before they were spoken. In detached passages he sometimes assumes an air of severity, and of that simpler dignity which belongs to Demosthenes, to whom, as an orator, he himself gave the preference.*

His eloquence will be found less remarkable for the predominance of any one faculty of the mind, than for that distinguishing feature already alluded to—

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* A writer, already quoted, says of him—"Equal to that great man (Cicero) in dialectic, in imagery, in occasional splendour, and in general information;—excelling him in political wisdom, and the application of history and philosophy to politics (*there is little doubt but that he also excelled him in the preceding points in which he is only rated as equal*)—he yields to him in pathos, in grace, in taste, and even in that which was not the forte of Cicero, in discretion. * * * * What particularly distinguishes him from the Greek and Roman orators, and from his contemporary rivals, were the countless lessons of civil and moral wisdom by which he dignified his compositions, and both enforced and illustrated his arguments; his sudden transitions from the grand to the gay, from sublimity to pleasantry, from the refined and recondite to the ordinary and obvious; and his frequent admixture of coarse and low expressions even into his most splendid passages. The effect of those was sometimes great, but they deformed and disgusted. 'The Venus of Phidias,' Wilkes used to say, 'was so lovely, that the Atheniana called her the Venus of Roses: lovely too, speaking generally, is the Venus of Burke; but she sometimes is the Venus of whisky.'"

a combination of them all; a peculiarity which has so much confused the judgment of many, and not mean critics, as to give rise to the most contradictory opinions. Some represent him as addressing the passions and imagination more than the understanding; others of overwhelming his subject by pouring in argument much more than enough; some of dealing in that bold, flowing, loose, yet powerful style which they term licentious; others of being often abrupt and severe; some for indulging in too much wit, and ornament, and lighter matter; others for being too metaphysical and refined, and too much above the intellectual level of the assembly he addressed, though that assembly was the House of Commons. Such seems to have been in some measure the opinion of Goldsmith, who describes him as being doomed (in allusion also to the fatigue and privations of debate)—"To eat mutton cold, and cut *blocks* with a razor." Some again have honestly confessed, that after much meditation they can make nothing at all of him—that his qualities contradict each other, and that his powers and his mode of wielding them are equally indescribable.

All these opinions, it is clear, cannot be true, and the confusion perhaps arises from each viewing him in the light which strikes strongest at the moment; from attending not so much to the conjoined effect of the whole of his argument, as to single parts, each of which indeed is so striking in itself, as to appear a principal in the cause in which it is embodied only as an auxiliary. Examine any single oration he has published; that on American Taxation for instance, the first, though perhaps not the best that he gave to the world, and the pervading feeling in the mind of the reader after perusal, is a conviction of sound, straight-forward sense, enlargement of mind, ingenious, and yet solid and honest views, moderation of tone, and acute, discriminating wisdom in the speaker. Let him omit the graphic sketches of character, if these should be deemed extraneous or meretricious, and there is little to offend even a fastidious taste: Nothing whatever which can be considered flowery (an accusation sometimes laid to Mr. Burke's charge by a strange confusion of language, though there is not even an approach to such a quality in any one of his speeches or writings); nothing merely amusing or ornamental; nothing which the plainest understanding may not instantly comprehend; nothing which merely solicits the imagination for a figure, without that figure strikes hard and home in some form or other upon the argument; but a total of vigour and effect on this, as on any question which much engaged his attention, that no other modern orator imparts, and which the records of Parliament teach us no other could have imparted. His great aim, as to manner, in this, as in all his public speeches and his writings, is strength. To this he often sacrifices the minor consideration of elegance or beauty of phrase, which were reserved chiefly for his private communications. He approaches to a contest therefore, not with two or three, but with that variety of qualities which may be compared to a whole armory of weapons; and the skill with which they were used, and the consequent difficulty experienced by the ablest opponents in meeting him fully on every point of attack, made him at all times a most formidable assailant in Parliament—a kind of Briareus among political disputants.

To arrive at this result his mind possessed a peculiarly discursive faculty; like a bird of prey upon the wing it was ever on the watch for something on which to levy contributions. Few things, therefore, whether great or little, whether of nature or of art, whether belonging to earth or to a higher region, escape him; he darts upon them without materially impeding his course, or has the rarer art, in most of his deviations, to carry his subject along with him. He seldom indeed stops to select; he grasps at much which a severer judgment would reject; but whatever he seizes he has the art beyond any other man of putting to use, and his progress often reminds us of a torrent sweeping rock and tree and earth along with it, yet acquiring additional power even from the heterogeneous nature of its accumulations. In these, generally speaking, there is very little of common place, or when a common idea is used, it is dressed in so novel and attractive a garb, that we are sometimes at a loss to recognize an old acquaintance. His conceptions, without violent straining, are almost always original. We meet with things in him which are to be found in no other quarter, which are wholly unexpected in themselves, and which perhaps scarcely any one ever before imagined, or at least thought of conjoining and adapting to such purposes as he had in view. He has drilled more extraordinary and bold auxiliaries to the art of persuasion than any other orator, ancient or modern; and while their novelty creates surprise, we are often at a loss to discover not only how they get into their new situation, but by what dexterity of mental magic they are made to play so conspicuous a part.

At times he seems on the verge of extravagance, not indeed that species of it which excites laughter or contempt, but rather astonishment. Along this dangerous precipice, dangerous in many respects to an ambitious orator or writer, he treads in perfect security, while other and even eminent men in attempting to pursue his track have not been able to preserve themselves from falling into absurdity, chiefly because they mistake the severe boldness of his occasionally figurative manner for a flowery manner, than which no two things can be more opposite; the former being the offspring of stronger, the latter in general, of looser and weaker intellectual powers. Nothing indeed is more peculiar to his impassioned style than this difficulty of imitation. To be convinced of it let any one take a page or two of any of our English classics, Addison or Johnson, for instance, and aim at hitting off their chief characteristics, and he may probably make the resemblance respectable; let him again attempt those of Burke, and he will almost certainly fail; he will either overdo or underdo it. Even Mr. Sheridan, with all his genius, who had his eye upon this great model in the early part of his career and in several of his speeches on the impeachment, soon found out that the endeavour was almost hopeless, and therefore prudently gave it up.* It is remarkable that Mr.

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* Since the first edition of this memoir was published, a work already alluded to (The Life of Sheridan) has appeared, which incidentally corroborates or follows, nearly every one of the views

Burke himself more than once experienced that his excellencies were, or were represented to be, defects, and that the very number of his talents served as a handle to impair the effect he expected to produce; for there is a large class of auditors to be found in the House of Commons as elsewhere, who think that an argument to be good must be dull, that wit in the course of it is misapplied, and that a flash of genius is a kind of sudden death to the whole process of reasoning—an idea to which even Mr. Pitt with characteristic dexterity was fond of giving counte-

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the present writer has taken of Burke, in the points in which he differed from, and excelled, his great contemporaries.—

"His (Sheridan's) attempts, indeed, at the florid, or figurative style, whether in his speeches or his writings, were seldom very successful. That luxuriance of fancy which in Burke was natural and indigenous, was in him rather a forced and exotic growth. It is a remarkable proof of the difference between them, that while, in the memorandums of speeches left behind by Burke, we find that the points of argument or business were those which he prepared, trusting to the ever-ready wardrobe of his fancy for their adornment,—in Mr. Sheridan's notes it is chiefly the decorative passages that are worked up beforehand to their full polish; while on the resources of his good sense, ingenuity, and temper, he seems to have relied for the management of his reasonings and facts. Hence naturally it arises, that the images of Burke being called up on the instant, like spirits, to perform the bidding of his argument, minister to it throughout with an almost co-ordinate agency; while the figurative fancies of Sheridan, already prepared for the occasion, and brought forth to adorn, not assist the business of the discourse, resemble rather those sprites which the magicians used to keep enclosed in phials, to be produced for a momentary enchantment and then shut up again.

"In truth, the similes and illustrations of Burke form such an intimate, and often essential part of his reasoning, that if the whole strength of the Samson does not lie in those luxuriant locks, it would at least be considerably diminished by their loss, whereas, nance, when he had nothing better at hand to offer to the hard-pushing and keen and various powers of his gifted adversary.

It may be true, that in performing the frequent duty of an Opposition leader—that of making an eloquent speech out of little or nothing—he sometimes, on lighter matter, at least, delighted to play with his subject; to wanton in the luxuriance of his imagination, wit, and sarcasm; to dally and amuse himself as well as others on the dull road it was so often

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in the speech of Mr. Sheridan (on the Begum charge) there is hardly one of the rhetorical ornaments that might not be detached without in any degree injuring the force of the general statement.

"Another consequence of this difference between them is observable in their respective modes of transition from what may be called the *business* of a speech to its more generalized and rhetorical parts. When Sheridan rises, his elevation is not sufficiently prepared; he starts abruptly and at once from the level of his statement, and sinks down into it again with the same suddenness. But Burke, whose imaginatiou never allows even business to subside into mere prose, sustains a pitch throughout which accustoms the mind to wonder, and while it prepares us to accompany him in his boldest flights, makes us, even when he walks, still feel that he has wings:—

'Même quand l'oiseau marche, on sent qu'il a des ailes.'

"It is surely a most unjust disparagement of the eloquence of Burke, to apply to it at any time of his life, the epithet 'flowery'—a designation only applicable to that ordinary ambition of style, whose chief display by necessity consists of ornament without thought, and pomp without substance. A succession of bright images, clothed in simple transparent language—even when, as in Burke, they 'crowd upon the aching sense' too dazzlingly—should never be confounded with that mere verbal opulence of style, which mistakes the glare of words for the glitter of ideas, and, like the Helen of the sculptor Lysippus, makes finery supply the place of beauty."

his lot to travel, by giving a kind of jubilee to his animal spirits. But his power over the main question was as visible on these as on more serious occasions; it was often termed the "wantonness of eloquence," and might be called the consciousness of mental power; he reminds us of a horse-soldier in an engagement, exercising preliminary sabre-flourishes over the head of a defenceless enemy on foot, previous to putting him to death. It would be hazardous to pronounce these or any other of his deviations misplaced, for some of the most skilful passages in oratory are those which occasionally glance from the main point to prepare attention for what is to follow. Homer is said to nod, and Burke may occasionally trifle, but both are probably the effects of design. Few subjects admit of continued excitement of mind for a length of time, and few audiences relish for three or four hours together what is called a continued chain of reasoning. Rests are as useful and necessary in a long speech as in a long journey, and their judicious intermixture, as they occasion the least fatigue, are likely to impart the greater pleasure. "To have attained a relish for his (Mr. Burke's) charms," says an eminent critic, "is greatly to have advanced in literature."

Certain peculiarities in his eloquence, such as the strength of imagination, the vehemence, the force of invective, the almost morbid acuteness of feeling (which nevertheless is one of the requisites to an orator to make his hearers also feel), belong as much perhaps to his country as to the individual. Several of the orators of Ireland exhibit something of the same spirit in the few specimens preserved of their most animated contentions. English Parliamentary oratory, so far as it is preserved, has little of this character. But the specimens of older date are so few and imperfect as to make it difficult to judge, for very little exists previous to the commencement of the late reign, which gives us any tolerable idea of the speeches, or style of speaking, of the great names in our political annals. Even the supposed early effusions of Lord Chatham are well known to derive their chief merit from the pen of Dr. Johnson, who rarely, if at all, heard him speak at that time, and who wrote his and the other speeches given to us as parliamentary debates, sometimes from a few meagre hints, frequently from none at all, simply from knowing which side of the argument the speakers had taken. Statesmen then contended as if their eloquence was only born to die with the debate of the day; to become for ever extinguished and forgotten in the very spot which gave it birth, leaving to posterity no memorial of their noblest stand against an unconstitutional measure or Minister, but the record of the rejection of the one, or the dismissal from office of the other. It is also true what Mr. Burke somewhere observes, that debates a century ago were comparative parish-vestry discussions to what they afterwards became. This change, according to the general belief of his contemporaries, was chiefly owing to himself. He is considered, by the enlarged views, the detailed expositions of policy, the intermixture of permanent truths bearing upon temporary facts, and the general lustre and air of wisdom which he was the first to introduce at large into Parliamentary discussion, greatly to have exalted the character of Parliament itself; and by the display of his own characteristics, to have excited the emulation of others. No comparison at least can be drawn between the tone and value of Parliamentary eloquence previous to his appearance there, and since.

As an accuser, his power was truly terrific; he has exhausted the whole compass of the English language in the fierceness of his invective and the bitterness of his censure; for even Junius, with all the advantages of indiscriminate personality, private scandal, and the mask under which he fought, has not exceeded him in severity, while he falls infinitely short of him in reach of thought, command of language, energy of expression, and variety of reproach. Junius is more pungent in his assaults, Mr. Burke more powerful; Junius imparts the idea of keenness, Mr. Burke of force; Junius of possessing powers to a certain degree circumscribed, Mr. Burke of a magnitude nearly boundless; Junius hews down his victim with a double-edged sabre, Mr. Burke fells him with a sledge-hammer, and repeats his blow so often, and in so many different modes, that few can again recognize the carcase he has once taken it in hand to mangle.

Much of this wrathful spirit arose from what he thought tyranny or crime, or where great public offences or great supposed culprits were in question, and when he conceived himself bound to summon up every faculty he possessed not merely to overpower but to destroy them. In reply to the attack of the Duke of Bedford, though he curbs much of his natural vehemence from the provocation being personal to himself, there is great vigour, with something of a lofty contempt of his opponent. But few, if any, records of exertions by one man equal in vehemence of censure or variety of reproach, in labour or in talents, those against the French Revolution and Mr. Hastings. Against the latter his speeches were heard with an awe approaching to terror; and though by some their severity has been censured, the best apologies, to which little perhaps can be added, were volunteered at the moment by two political adversaries, Mr. Pitt and Mr. Wilberforce;* but it must be remembered that he solemnly denied having used any of the more offensive expressions and phrases which were put into his mouth by the idle or designing rumours of the day.

In the more mechanical part of oratory—delivery, his manner was usually bold, less graceful than powerful, his enunciation vehement and unchecked by any embarrassment, his periods flowing and harmonious, his language always forcible, sometimes choice, but, when strongly excited by the subject, acrimonious or sarcastic, his epithets numerous, and occasionally strong or coarse, his invective furious, and sometimes overpowering, and to the last he retained much of the Irish accent, which, in the opinion of many, materially marred the power of his eloquence. At times his gesticulation was violent, his tone harsh, and an habitual, undulating motion of the head (which is alluded to in the lines before quoted from Simkin's Letters) had the appearance of indicating something of a self-confident or intractable spirit; he seemed as if he would command fully as much as he would persuade, the auditors of the opposite benches, and the effect proved occasionally disadvantageous to his views.

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* The latter, in an animated address, said, he did not wonder at the mind of Mr. Burke being warmed, and his feelings excited, by the nature of the supposed crimes of the accused; for he was aware of the transactions in India before almost any one else; he had been brooding over them for years; and it was natural for him to see their enormity in a magnified point of view. Mr. Pitt (9th May, 1787,) "admitted that he was once of opinion that the language of *those who chiefly promoted the present proceeding* was too full of acerbity, and much too passionate and exaggerated; but when he found what the nature of the crimes alleged was, and how strong the presumption that the allegations were true, he confessed that he could not expect that gentlemen, when reciting what they thought actions of treachery, actions of violence and oppression, and demanding an investigation into those actions, should speak a language different from that which would naturally arise from the contemplation of such actions."

His speeches, though always abounding in instructive and ingenious matter, were sometimes, like those of Mr. Fox, too long, both orators sinning in this respect from a fullness of mind which, having once begun to disburthen itself, appeared inexhaustible. Three hours from each being a common effort, left nothing for any one else on the same side to say. Some Members expressed discontent at being thus thrown into the shade, particularly those of Opposition after the quarrel on the French Revolution, when one of the principal is said to have complained of Mr. Burke being too much of a monopolist in this way, though he admitted him to be "undoubtedly the best informed man in either House of Parliament, the most eloquent man, and frequently the wittiest man." The three great orators of the age sinned in this way nearly alike. A modern writer of merit says, "Both orators (Mr. Fox and Mr. Pitt) were verbose—the former by his repetitions—the latter by his amplifications." To this it may be added, that Mr. Burke's fault was fulness—a profusion of illustrative matter—mostly original, commonly powerful, always various—but even variety will not at all times compensate for length. This fault is more venial however than that of either of his contemporaries in *repetitions* or *amplifications.* There are moments indeed when the best speakers, especially out of power, cannot obtain an attentive hearing from hungry and impatient auditors; a debater must often wait for the *mollissima tempora fandi;* and the great subject of this sketch himself particularly commends Charles Townshend's skill in this respect, as "hitting the house between wind and water."

A description of the manner as well as of the power of Mr. Burke in debate, by the Duke de Levis, is interesting as coming from a foreigner; the remarks on his dress will be thought not a little characteristic of a Frenchman's constitutional attachment to show and effect, in opposition to English plainness and simplicity. The occasion was a debate on the French Revolution:—

"The man whom I had the greatest desire to hear was the celebrated Mr. Burke, author of the Essay on the Sublime and Beautiful, and often himself sublime. At length he rose, but in beholding him I could scarcely recover from my surprise. I had so frequently heard his eloquence compared to that of Demosthenes and Cicero, that my imagination associating him with those great names, had represented him to me in a noble and imposing garb. I certainly did not expect to find him in the British

Parliament dressed in the ancient toga; nor was I prepared to see him in a tight brown coat, which seemed to impede every movement, and, above all, the little bob-wig with curls. * * * In the mean time he moved into the middle of the House, contrary to the usual practice, for the members speak standing and uncovered, not leaving their places. But Mr. Burke, with the most natural air imaginable, with seeming humility, and with folded arms, began his speech in so low a tone of voice that I could scarcely hear him. Soon after, however, becoming animated by degrees, he described religion attacked, the bonds of subordination broken, civil society threatened to its foundations; and in order to show that England could depend only upon herself, he pictured in glowing colours the political state of Europe; the spirit of ambition and folly which pervaded the greater part of her governments; the culpable apathy of some, the weakness of all. When in the course of this grand sketch he mentioned Spain, that immense monarchy, which appeared to have fallen into a total legarthy, 'What can we expect,' said he, 'from her?—mighty indeed, but unwieldy—vast in bulk, but inert in spirit—a whale stranded upon the sea-shore of Europe.' The whole house was silent; all eyes were upon him, and this silence was interrupted only by the loud cries of hear! hear! a kind of accompaniment which the friends of the speaking Member adopt in order to direct attention to the most brilliant passages of his speech. But these cheerings were superfluous on the present occasion; every mind was fixed; the sentiments he expressed spread themselves with rapidity; every one shared his emotion, whether he represented the ministers of religion proscribed, inhumanly persecuted and banished, imploring the Almighty in a foreign land to forgive their ungrateful country; or when he depicted in the most affecting manner the misfortunes of the Royal Family, and the humiliation of the daughter of the Cæsars. Every eye was bathed in tears at the recital of these sad calamities supported with such heroic fortitude. Mr. Burke then, by an easy transition, passed on to the exposition of those absurd attempts of inexperienced men to establish a chimerical liberty; nor did he spare the petulant vanity of upstarts in their pretended love for equality. The truth of these striking and animated pictures made the whole House pass in an instant from the tenderest emotions of feeling to bursts of laughter; never was the electric power of eloquence more imperiously felt; this extraordinary man seemed to raise and quell the passions of his auditors with as much ease, and as rapidly, as a skilful musician passes into the various modulations of his harpsichord. I have witnessed many, too many political assemblages and striking scenes where eloquence performed a noble part, but the whole of them appear insipid when compared with this amazing effort."[*]

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[*] Tastes proverbially differ. Having therefore heard a foreigner upon the manner of Burke, let us attend to a rival orator of our own country, who must, however, be listened to in this matter by the reader with many grains of allowance. The anecdote appears in a note to the life of Dr. E. D. Clarke, the traveller, from a memorandum kept by him.

"Monday, July 5, 1819.—While we were waiting at Trinity Lodge for the deputation from the Senate to conduct the Chan-

Considerable difference of manner may be observed in his speeches and writings, the former hav-

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cellor, I had a conversation with Lord Erskine upon the qualifications of Burke as an orator. Lord Erskine said that his defect was *episode.* 'A public speaker,' said he, 'should never be *episodical*—it is a very great mistake. I hold it to be a rule respecting public speaking, which ought never to be violated, that the speaker should not introduce into his oratory insular brilliant passages—they always tend to call off the minds of his hearers, and to make them wander from what ought to be the main business of his speech. If he wish to introduce brilliant passages, *they should run along the line of his subject matter,* and never quit it. Burke's episodes were highly beautiful—I know nothing *more* beautiful, but they were his defects in speaking.' Then he introduced one of his most beautiful *episodes,* taken from a speech on the American war; and repeated by heart the whole of that part of the speech in which he introduces the quotation 'Acta Parentum,' &c. 'all this' said he, 'is very beautiful, but it ought to be avoided. Now I will give you another specimen from his speeches on the same war, in which his oratory is *perfect*—where the most common, familiar, and even low technical expressions are made to blend themselves with the finest passages; and where having full possession of the minds of his hearers, he never lets them go from him for an instant.' Then he repeated all that speech.

"Lord Erskine also told me that Burke's manner was *sometimes* bad—'*it was like* that of an Irish chairman.' 'Once,' said he, 'I was so tired of hearing him in a debate upon the India bill, that not liking he should see me leave the House of Commons while he was speaking, I crept along under the benches and got out, and went to the Isle of Wight. Afterwards that very speech of his was published, and I found it to be so extremely beautiful *that I actually wore it into pieces by reading it.*'"

Upon this piece of conversational criticism, if correctly reported by Dr. Clarke, a few words may not be misplaced.

The *tone* of it belongs to that vague and careless common-place rattle in which Lord Erskine frequently indulged, without much considering the precise import of his words. The *place* was somewhat odd; for as Burke, Dr. Johnson has told us, was great even when encountered casually under a *gate-way,* so, Lord Erskine, who it is ing a more rapid, vehement, freedom of style, throwing off shorter and less finished, though not less spirited sketches than the latter; there is likewise more aim at effect, the sentences shorter and more epigrammatic, and the subject on the whole more condensed. A belief prevailed for a short time in the early part of his career of their being written previous to delivery—an impression arising from their admitted superiority over those of his contemporaries; but this was not the case. He meditated deeply, and was sometimes heard to express his thoughts aloud. On new, or very important questions, he committed some of the chief heads of his

well known had this great example frequently in his eye, thought he could not do less than attempt something worth recording when conversing in an anticipated interview with a Professor in a University *lodge.* The *time* was peculiar, for it was at a period when his lordship was said to have outlived not only his reputation, but his faculties. The *subject* likewise is worthy of notice; for these orations, though certainly not more perfect than any other human productions, he had three years before at Edinburgh pronounced to be immortal and inimitable, and in his own oratory had occasionally attempted to imitate their style; but having, like Sheridan, failed in the design, had, like him also, soon given it up; besides, he has himself told us, that "he had transcribed with his own hand all the most admirable passages in the writings and speeches of this most extraordinary man."

His general remarks on episode (though these were not original, but borrowed from a contemporary journal of criticism) may, or may not be true; they prove nothing; for such things depend upon times, circumstances, and situations, to which general rules do not apply. Some of the finest things to be met with in oratory are in their nature episodical. Whether Burke's episodes be improperly introduced is a question to be decided by taste, and a consideration of circumstances, rather than by an abstract critical dogma. In the speech on American taxation, for instance, the argument to paper, but for the language in which it was conveyed, the colouring, illustration, and the whole artillery of that forcible diction and figurative boldness in which he has not merely no equal, but no competitor, he trusted to a well-stored mind, a retentive memory, and a readiness which, from constant discipline in the school of debate, never failed him.

As to his published speeches we have the authority of Gibbon who heard them, as well as of still more intimate friends, for the truth of the fact that they received no embellishments in passing through the press. It is well known indeed that the frag-

characters drawn of Charles Townshend, George Grenville, and Lord Chatham, may, by many readers, be deemed too much in the nature of episode; yet, independent of their beauty, they are not without much of that very test of propriety which Lord Erskine expressly specifies, namely, *running along the line of his subject.* So of his deviations in other speeches from the direct line of march of his argument.

The observation of his lordship as to Burke's manner* being like that of 'an Irish chairman' is an extravagant exaggeration; and the story of *creeping along under the benches* (if taken literally) must be a positive untruth, for such a thing was not practicable. The whole conversation bears traces of that loose juvenility of manner to which he was prone, but to which no great weight can be attached from the terms in which it is given. Burke, on the floor of the House of Commons, was, as has been already said in this work, sometimes unduly positive—sometimes dictatorial in his mode of address; but vulgarity was as wholly foreign to his manner, either in public or private, as to his mind.

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* Of Lord Erskine's own manner Lord Byron sarcastically observed, that "it was true he had never heard him at the bar, but after hearing him in the House he had no further wish to hear him any where."

ments preserved of several of them were written down *after* and not *before* delivery, asssisted by the notes and recollection of different Members, his friends, and not unfrequently of the public reporters.

A writer of consideration,* however, seems to insinuate that the speeches actually delivered in Parliament differed from those that issued from the press. This is a misrepresentation; unintentional no doubt, though not unexpected from a Foxite, who must always be excused where the credit of his principal is in question, and he admits that there is nothing in Fox or Pitt, or indeed in any other orator up to Cicero, to be compared in any degree with the published speeches of Burke. If there be in reality, as he states, any difference between the speeches uttered and the speeches printed, it must be remembered that he *himself* published no speech after that on the Nabob of Arcot's debts in 1785, except an abstract of that on the army estimates in 1790; and therefore is not responsible for any variations there may be in the reports given of them from what he actually delivered. Up to the period in question, or nearly so, Gibbon, who was opposed to him in politics, had to listen to him night after night, assailing not only the Ministry generally, but more especially the very office (that of a Lord of Trade) which he held, and who therefore, it may be presumed, looked pretty sharply to what he said. The historian gives us his testimony expressly as is here stated. He is therefore directly opposed to the writer in question; and of his superior means of judging, from being a Member of the House and a constant attendant upon it, there can be no dispute.—But it should ever be borne in mind by the reader, that no man who considers Mr. Fox's line of politics in 1793 prudent or wise, or who thinks that the French revolutionary war was unnecessary, or could have been avoided, ought ever to trust himself with speaking of Mr. Burke.—There is a fog over his mental vision which distorts every object in that line of view which he looks at.

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* Mr. Charles Butler—Reminiscences, p. 166.

HIS WRITINGS.

Next to the thirst for oratorical renown, perhaps quite equal to it in degree, Mr. Burke aimed at acquiring weight and celebrity by his pen; seeming to think that fame in the senate never reached its highest value until stamped by the approving seal of the press. Avaricious, as it appears, of excellence, he grasped at superiority in both modes of distinction, desirous to show the world that though in a series of 2000 years (with the single exception of Lord Bolingbroke, if he can be deemed an exception) one of them had been found sufficient for the faculties of any one man, he at least possessed the ability to write with, if possible, still more power than he could speak. Of this sort of distinction he judged, and judged truly, that no superior party influence, no mere personal attachments, no jealousy, no misrepresentation either by Whig or Tory, no weight of purse, no family connexion however high, could deprive him; for the world at large is a tolerably impartial tribunal.

Yet as men have an obvious aversion to the union of excellencies in any one person, the moment he was pronounced the greatest writer of the age—a verdict which none even of his adversaries has withheld—some attempts were made to question, what was never questioned before that time, his power in the House of Commons; exemplifying the remark of Dr. Parr when speaking of him; "There is an unwillingness in the world to admit that the same man has excelled in various pursuits; yet Burke's compositions, diversified as they are in their nature, though each excelling in its kind, who does not read with instruction and delight?" When this was written it must be remembered the French Revolution had not taken place, and consequently half his strength remained still unknown. That event drew it forth with indescribable effect. He had to contend with much of the political, and by far the greater part of the literary strength of the country, at least that portion of it which was seen most frequently in the press, without a single second of even moderate talents in the literary class, to assist him, yet he overpowered them all. His arm was indeed so irresistible as to give countenance to the general opinion that no allies * were necessary to one who was in himself an

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* An anecdote of one of the ablest exhibits another instance of Mr. Burke's characteristic kindness. The present Serjeant Goold, of the Irish bar, then an aspiring but briefless barrister, excited by admiration of the "Reflections on the Revolution in France," and of their great author, and then lately returned from Paris, where he had witnessed the *practical effects* of the new system of liberty, wrote a reply to several of Mr. Burke's assailants. At this time he was wholly unknown to the latter. Some time afterwards, however, he received in Dublin a letter from him, stating that he had not forgotten his obliging pamphlet, and

army; for aid would be more likely to enfeeble than to support him—and the advice given by an acute writer was in consequence literally followed:—

> "———————— In resistless prose,
> Leave Burke *Alone* to thunder on our foes."
>
> *Pursuits of Literature.*

It was therefore with great propriety, in allusion to his power over public opinion even some years previous to the French Revolution, that Boswell, who knew him so well, in a pamphlet published in 1785, applied to him the words of Virgil—

> Regum æquabat opes animis.

It was early remarked among his characteristics that to a perseverance not to be overcome, to the greatest original genius, and to extraordinary acquirements, he joined in the discussion of a subject unusual comprehensiveness of outline with minute knowledge and accuracy of detail.

What he says of Alfred the Great, in the Essay on English History (p. 297, 8vo. edit.) may, with strict truth be applied to the distinguishing features of his own mind—" In a word, he comprehended in

that he begged leave to return the favour by giving him an introduction that might be serviceable to his interests; for Earl Fitzwilliam, the new Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, being to spend a few days with him at Beaconsfield before his departure, if he would come over and join the party, he might find the excursion neither unpleasant nor unprofitable. Mr. Goold, after some difficulty in raising the *materiel* for the journey, came, but too late; the society of such a man, however, well compensated the trouble; and he returned to Dublin with such letters of introduction as would have had due weight, had the noble Earl continued in that government.

the greatness of his mind the whole of government and all its parts at once; and what is most difficult to human frailty, was at the same time sublime and minute."

The reader of his works will be frequently led to appropriate this remark to him who made it, by observing his eagerness to embrace the whole of a subject, to leave no part of it unsifted, to place it in every variety of light, and to apply every possible illustration; to turn it back and front, inside and out, upside and down, so that no point likely to afford aid to the investigation of truth shall pass unexamined. This, which is one of the first merits of a fair disputant, was also his natural disposition. He cannot bear, apparently, to blink or narrow a question, even when doing so may be supposed favourable to his views, but sometimes gives the first hint of a difficulty in order to show his skill in overcoming it. It is contrary to the nature of the man to be pent up within a small compass; he must have room; give him vent or he continually threatens to explode and overwhelm you. He can no more be thrust up into the straitened corner of a subject—a trick which the practised debater and reasoner plays off on the more inexperienced—than you can squeeze an elephant into the cage of a parrot; for the cast of his frame is too ponderous, and his perceptions too acute, to submit to be caught in a trap which is commonly set to hamper the unwary. He seldom takes a topic in hand without so far exhausting it, that we find little interest, and frequently very little profit, in following any one else in the same track of argument.

One of his chief excellencies is in being an original and profound thinker. He continually strikes out something which is either new, or new in the connexion in which it stands, and has contrived to throw together more numerous and important political truths, intermixed with a great variety of moral truths drawn from acquaintance with the world, than any other writer on public affairs. The same profundity of thought which qualifies him to make so many discoveries in his progress, enables him also to dispel a variety of errors. He traces a proposition up to its source, and from its source through all its ramifications, so that if there be a fallacy in any part he is pretty sure to detect it. Axioms and opinions relative to our domestic politics, which were scarcely ever before doubted, are no sooner touched by him than they prove to be weak or questionable; several which might be mentioned he has wholly overthrown.

The desire thoroughly to clear the way before him, to afford the fullest information, and to leave nothing unexplained or unanswered, has given rise to the charge of his being diffuse. Diffuseness, however, implies something of weakness and verbosity; and he must be a hardy critic who shall venture to declare that these are in any degree characteristic of his writings. He may be full; unnecessarily so perhaps in the opinions of some, but this abundance presents ample matter for the exercise of the understanding; there is no accumulation of sentences to spin out a thought, no mere verbiage; but on all occasions a corresponding influx of ideas which open out great truths, enlarge the bounds or add to the particulars, of knowledge, or unveil the latent springs of human passions and actions as they operate on those human institutions which so much of his life was employed in improving or defending; and they serve to make us not merely wiser politicians but much wiser men.

We rise from the perusal of his labours, satisfied that we have not spent our time in discussions merely applicable to temporary or party interests. There is a conviction of knowing what we did not know before, of feeling something which we did not before feel, like permanent enlargement of mind; and this probably arises from the influence of that combination of qualities which constitute his peculiar greatness; by finding genius blended with knowledge; elegance of exposition with depth of thought; ingenuity with solidity; principles with facts; philosophy with practical politics; maxims of abstract wisdom, with those of his own experience among men; serving to bear upon, to illustrate, and to explain each other. To this task the mere politician, or the mere philosopher, would have been equally incompetent; it is the rare union of the characters which gives that degree of value to his writings so as to cause them to be quoted every night in both Houses of Parliament, as the greatest authority of our time. And this testimony cannot well be disputed as partial, since it is borne by Whigs and Tories, by Ministry, and by Opposition, by all grades in political opinion—Lords Grenville, Londonderry, and Erskine—and by almost every other man of talents and celebrity, who have united (in this instance at least if in no other) to pronounce them, in their place in Parliament, immortal.

Their influence upon the public mind at large has long been admitted. To them we owe not only much of that system of policy which has saved England and all Europe from that subjugation which France, whether influenced by National Convention, Directory, Consuls, or Emperor, has perseveringly attempted; but also the chief arguments in support of that policy urged in Parliament during the last twenty years. On a variety of other great questions of national interest, Mr. Burke's influence is nearly as great. He has anticipated much of what is daily urged on many of the most popular topics; while many even of the most brilliant passages, in the very best speeches in both Houses, whether in reasoning or in rhetorical art and address, are immediately obvious to the diligent reader of his works, as but repetitions of his thoughts and manner; sometimes in his own language, often with little variation, the speakers probably not aware at the moment of the source whence they borrow.

The same remark applies to several of our popular writers, miscellaneous as well as those devoted to the discussion of public affairs—pamphletteers, reviewers, and political essayists. His works form their chief stock in trade; the mine from which is dug out their most sterling ore; the aliment on which they exist; the bread and beef, and wine, on which they daily feed and fatten; his ideas dissected out of their connecting positions, and hashed up in some new form to suit the particular tastes of the writers, or the voracious appetite of the public, for something new, and strong, and striking, but still substantially his ideas. Few of these persons, it may be added, have grace enough fully to acknowledge their obligations.

His phraseology is another characteristic and popular feature, on which contributions are levied in all the popular publications of the age, to an extent of which many readers have little conception. They are often of a very original cast, unusually forcible, expressive, and often condense much meaning within a small compass. In the use of epithets he is too free and unguarded; they were mostly the offspring of vehement feeling in debate, but at any time, perhaps, form a weak point in oratory, as being open to the charge of exaggeration, or to contradiction, reprehension, and sometimes to ridicule.

He is almost the first of our writers, for Junius cannot be said to have preceded him, who has thrown the rays of genius and eloquence over political discussion; previous to his time, a political book, and a dull book, were nearly synonymous terms. Lord Bolingbroke's pieces form perhaps the only exception to this remark, though many do not admit him to be an exception, as his writings, political and philosophical, are now nearly forgotten; and he has neither that firm ground-work of truth, that vigour of reasoning or of language, that variety and splendour of genius, which Mr. Burke has employed in communicating abstract truth and in discussing subjects not in themselves of the most enlivening description, but which acquire spirit and vivacity under his management; for while his argument clears the road, his flashes of genius and his wit enliven, his imagination adorns it. Scarcely any other man but himself could have produced such speeches as he has left us on the unpromising topics of economical Reform, and on the debts of the Nabob of Arcot.

A minute critic may find in his numerous writings traces of three, or even more, different sorts of styles, or shades of the same style, adapted no doubt, like a skilful rhetorician, to the nature of the topic on which he had to treat. The Letter to a Noble Lord, a considerable part of the Reflections on the Revolution in France, and large portions of his Speeches, may be taken as specimens of a highly poetical and impassioned style: the Thoughts on the Discontents, the Letter to the Sheriffs of Bristol, to Sir Hercules Langrishe, and others on Irish and French Affairs, with the Thoughts on Regicide Peace, and perhaps the Essay on the Sublime and Beautiful, as coming under the denomination of his middle style: the Charges against Mr. Hastings, which are drawn up with uncommon skill, the Addresses to the King, and to the Americans, on the proposed Secession from Parliament in 1777, the Historical Articles in the Annual Register for several years, and his Abridgment of English History, as his plainest or grave style. The Vindication of Natural Society, and the Account of the European Settlements in America, differ perhaps in some degree from each of these as well as from each other. And the short account of a Short Administration, and the Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs, present a difference in manner from the whole of the others.

His letters, generally speaking, though with several exceptions, belong to his plain style. In nothing are his powers more evident than in his correspondence, kept up for thirty years, with the most eminent men in the country, and with several foreigners of distinction, some of which have been already published, while others of high character are hereafter to appear; though few can be expected to exceed the letters to Barry. They partake generally of much of the instructive character of his writings, and of the same force of observation, though often expressed with more elegance than he employs in his publications; some of them, without losing any thing of epistolary ease, amount almost to disquisitions on the subjects on which they touch, especially on public affairs, and on criticism. In vivacity, which many esteem the chief recommendation of a familiar letter-writer, he is deficient, evidently not from want of power, but of inclination to deal in mere pleasantry upon paper; his aim was rather to inform than to amuse.

Allusions have been already made in this work, to a vulgar though frequent error—frequent at least among those who know little of the original, or who, possessing little critical discrimination, confound two things essentially different—that his style is flowery. Not only is this not the case, but it may be questioned whether it can be called an ornamented style, all the common characters of such a style, as it is exhibited by others, being at variance with those peculiarities which distinguish the productions of Mr. Burke. If a definition be required of its nature, it will be difficult to give this without periphrasis, but it may be termed an impassioned style, the product of ardent genius and strong feeling, studded with some bold figures, not laid on for the sake of ornament, but springing out of the intensity of his conceptions; meant not to adorn, but to convey a more perfect image to the mind. Of these figures much is occasionally said; yet they are on the whole less remarkable for number, than for a certain daring originality of feature not to be found in any other orator, and in none of our poets, except in some of the most sublime conceptions of Paradise Lost; and their effect usually is to sink deep into the mind, and to be recalled by memory as things worthy of recollection, when the same idea expressed in common language, would have been forgotten probably as soon as heard. A figure, therefore, such as Burke commonly uses, is wholly distinct in its nature from mere ornament; it may rather be considered an appeal to the judgment through the attractive medium of the imagination. In the conception, he aims much less at the beautiful, than at the great, the striking, and the sublime; often he is eminently happy in their nature, and in their use; now and then, though rarely, rather strained; occasionally coarse or unseemly; but always forcible.

He deals occasionally, but not offensively, in antithesis; rather sparingly in climax; sometimes in personification and apostrophe; in interrogatory he is often powerful; but his taste in pursuing a simile too far may at times afford matter for dispute. His favourite and most brilliant figure is metaphor, and in this he is frequently amenable to the laws of criticism from its being imperfect or broken; offending in this way, like all great and original minds, against the strict canons of art, yet overpowering them all by his genius. An instance of this mingled beauty and imperfection may be taken at random. He is alluding to the bickerings with America, excited by Mr. George Grenville, whose character he is sketching, and whom he represents to have understood more of business and of the forms of office on common occasions, than of enlarged and prudent policy on great emergencies—

"These forms are adapted to ordinary occasions, and therefore persons who are nurtured in office do admirably well as long as things go on in their common order; *but when the high roads are broken up, and the waters are out, when a new and troubled scene is opened, and the file affords no precedent,* then it is that a greater knowledge of mankind, and a far more extensive comprehension of things, is requisite, than ever office gave, or than office can ever give." Public discontent and confusion overspreading the country like a vast inundation, effacing all former beacons for the guidance of its rules, and leaving the judgment to its own unassisted efforts, is a noble idea; but something of metaphorical propriety and grandeur is lost by being joined to the literal reality of the "*file of office.*"

An instance of strained metaphor has been already partially quoted in allusion to what he thought the over-done economy of Mr. Pitt, in some regulations proposed in 1785—"He (Mr. Pitt) chooses to suppose (for he does not pretend more than to suppose) a naked possibility that he shall draw some resource out of crumbs dropped from the trenchers of penury; that something shall be laid in store from the short allowance of revenue officers overloaded with duty, and famished for want of bread; by a reduction from officers, who are at this very hour ready to batter the Treasury with what breaks through stone walls, for an increase of their appointments. From the marrowless bones of these skeleton establishments, *by the use of every sort of cutting, and of every sort of fretting tool, he flatters himself that he may chip and rasp an empirical alimentary powder, to diet into some similitude of health and substance the languishing chimeras* of fraudulent reformation." The metaphorical allusions in the first sentence of this passsge are unobjectionable and forcible, while in the second they pass into the simile, and appear constrained and unnatural, though applicable to every part of the character he had given of the bill in the previous portion of his speech. This instance of extravagant simile, selected for its objectionable nature, may however be considered as scarcely fair towards his reputation, as it is the most constrained in his works.

Trivial imperfections of this kind, amid numberless specimens remarkable for fitness and correctness, detract little from the merit of an orator; abstracted from the subject they may be open to objection, but taken along with it few readers think them worthy of notice, and fewer still would wish them expunged. An imperfect metaphor forms indeed fine food for the indignation of the critic, who fastens upon the unhappy offender as he would upon a thief caught in the act of purloining his property, and commonly handles him with little less mercy. But, after all, it may be doubted whether much of this critical horror does not partake of the character of learned trifling; for if we appeal to experience, to the facts furnished every day by the intercourse of life and business, we find that though metaphors are in continual use by all ranks of people, few of them when examined are critically perfect. To be so, they mostly require to be studied, and the most beautiful require it the most. In extemporaneous oratory, such as we usually hear in the British Senate, this is not to be expected. He who would stop in the career of his argument to labour a metaphor with minute point and polish, might gain the reputation of a sensitive critic, but he would probably gain no other. Few writers, perhaps, would desire to see their ideas submitted to the world in their first words, and still greater allowances require to be made for the orator.

A charge has been brought against him from high authority (Dugald Stewart, Esq.), that, though confessedly one of the greatest masters of the English language, he often debases his style by the intermixture of cant and colloquial words and allusions. The fact of such intermixture may be true, but a different inference may be drawn from their use; it is but fair at least, before we wholly condemn his practice, to consider his object.

Having sometimes to address a popular assembly, intelligent, and well educated indeed, but still essentially popular, and at other times the public at large through the medium of the press, upon topics which intimately concerned the welfare of all, and with which all were, or fancied they were, acquainted, he aimed, as already hinted, at being strong rather than dignified; bold, clear, and intelligible, rather than refined; mastering their opinions by his power rather than by his elegance; omitting nothing which he thought might influence them, and for this purpose calling in the aid of the most familiar, perhaps homely, associations. Like Swift, another of our most powerful writers, he was determined at whatever cost or sacrifice, though he never like him descends to gross abuse and coarseness, to make a deep and indelible impression. He conceived deeply and felt strongly, and would not weaken the force of his first ideas, by any thing like squeamishness of expression; he was too prone perhaps to the use of the vulgar tongue in occasionally ill-chosen epithets, though not in sentiment. Oratory, however, has a licence in language which is denied to history, to criticism, to judicial statements and investigations, or to the philosophical treatise; in the former, therefore, if his taste, judged by his own practice, be often faulty, the error probably arose from an exaggerated idea of his privilege, as under the other heads just mentioned, his History, the Essay on the Sublime, and the Articles of Charge against Mr. Hastings, the style is unobjectionable; in the latter indeed it is so precise and appropriate, that though occupying an octavo volume and a half, I do not remember (what many, from the common idea, entertained of Mr. Burke, will scarcely believe) meeting with but one or two metaphorical allusions, and nothing that can be considered too familiar or colloquial.

It is likewise urged, and probably with more force, that he is too liberal in the use of terms borrowed from art and science, as these, though serving to give variety to imagery, may not be so universally intelligible to the mass of readers. It is rare, however, that they are beyond general comprehension; but he certainly levies upon all professions and occupations without scruple; upon the divine, the moralist, the philosopher, the physician, the astronomer, the chemist, the mathematician, the lawyer, the surgeon, the farmer, the soldier, the seaman, and many others, down even to the baker, and butcher, instances of all of which may be collected from his works. His nautical allusions, which were gleaned probably from Lord Keppel, Sir Charles Saunders, and other intimate naval friends, are not only numerous, but are applied with more propriety than a landsman can usually accomplish; as in "trimming the ship," in "heaving the lead every inch of way I made," a metaphor strongly expressive of the care and caution exerted upon the economical Reform bill; in lawyers (who are said to bend their eyes by instinct on the peerage) "casting their best bower-anchor in the House of Lords," and a great variety of others. In surgery, the terms "solution of continuity," and "working off the slough of slavery," may not be so easily understood by the unprofessional, as "the broad-cast swing of the arm" of the farmer, and the supposed questions of the agrarian butchers of the Duke of Bedford's acres—"how he cuts up?" "how he tallows in the cawl or on the kidneys."

Another resource for his exuberant genius was the use of scriptural phraseology, which was applied to political circumstances with too much freedom, though certainly without the least idea of irreverence, but to those who did not know him or make allowance for his sallies, conveying something of that impression; as in calling Lord Hillsborough's Letter to the Colonies during the disputes, "a canonical book of ministerial scripture,—the epistle general to the Americans;" "it is good for us to be here;" "brother Lazarus is not dead, but sleepeth;" and many more of a similar description. If the language of sacred writ be ever admissible in general discussions—and the propriety of the practice is very doubtful—it is perhaps least objectionable when used by a great orator on a great occasion, affecting the general interests of nations, or of large bodies of the community, and when neither the speaker nor the subject is likely to degrade it. Lord Chatham used it frequently. To any one indeed who has a proper relish for a high order of literary beauty, it requires some self-denial not to seize upon phrases which seem to stand so opportunely in the way; for they recur continually to the memory, they are in themselves often sublime, always expressive, and have the advantage of being universally familiar.

Add this error, however, to his other literary sins—to "his prolific imagination, which (in the language of Mr. Pitt) had so long been the wonder and pleasure of the House," to his irregular or broken figures, to his occasional dallying with his subject, to the too frequent use of terms of art, to his frequent invective, to the introduction of undignified and colloquial expressions—and to how little do they all amount? On the other hand, where shall we find among orators or statesmen so much depth and originality of thought, fulness of information, variety of diction, vigour of expression, bold and sublime imagery; so much of grandeur* and energy of eloquence, or of beautiful and impressive writing?

HIS LEADING PUBLIC PRINCIPLES.

As a statesman, Mr. Burke's distinguishing policy is to be traced in his speeches and writings. These, as forming a valuable manual for reference to future legislators and ministers of the country, will be consulted for the opinions which they teach, and the difficulties they tend to solve, for their vigour and eloquence as compositions, for clear and enlarged views on great constitutional questions, for a thorough acquaintance with the duties of rulers and subjects in their various relations of obedience and control. To all his ideas on these points universal assent may not be given, nor was their justice always admitted at the time. But experience has proved they were grounded in sound judgment, and in a penetrating and prospective spirit—the first qualities beyond all others for those who fill public stations, and for the want of which no others can compensate—and in a wisdom not abstruse or perplexed, but in its application obvious and easy.

It was peculiar to him—one of the many distinctions which belonged to his character—that, possessed of a fancy and imagination singularly brilliant, of vast stores of knowledge, of a liberal and philosophical turn of mind, added to having passed much time among books—all the elements which unite to compose a beautiful system-maker and imposing theorist, produced in him a directly opposite effect. He would admit of no innovating speculations into the business of government. He was, if any man was, a practical man. He professed to build, as the wise of all times have done, upon the basis of history and experience. "I prefer the collective wisdom of ages," said he, alluding to Mr. Pitt and Mr. Fox, "to the abilities of any two men living;" but this would have done little for his fame, without that happy conformation of mind to enable him to discriminate the nature of the deductions to be drawn from it;—between what to apply to use, and what was inapplicable. He entertained for ancient institutions that respect and admiration which all sober minds feel when these institutions have been productive of good; and as long as the effects continued the same, he disapproved of attempts to alter the practice.

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* "Junius," somewhere observes an acute critic (Mr. Hazlitt), who will not be suspected of undue partiality to Mr. Burke, "is the first of his class, but that class is not the highest. Junius's manner is the strut of a petit-maitre, Burke's the stalk of a giant; if grandeur is not to be found in Burke, it is to be found nowhere"

His aim therefore, in our domestic policy, was to preserve all our institutions, in the main, as they are; for the simple reason that under them the nation had become great, and prosperous, and happy. It was not his desire that we should shut our eyes to abuse—his whole life, he said, had been spent in resisting and repealing abuses—but to amend deliberately and cautiously; to innovate not at all, for innovation was not reformation; to overturn nothing which had the sanction of time and many happy days in its favour; to correct and perfect the superstructures, but to leave all the foundations, the antiquity of which formed a guarantee of their usefulness and stability in the general opinion, sacred and unharmed. "The love of things ancient," says Hooker, "doth argue stayedness; but levity and want of experience maketh apt unto innovations." Bacon thought time the great innovator; Mr. Burke seemed to think that in the nice connexion between the supreme governing authority and the people, he was the chief, or the only one, who could act without exciting jealousy on the one part or on the other. He did not regard a form of government as necessarily good, because it was plausible upon paper, but rather looked to its actual workings; to its effects rather than to its nominal merits; to benefit to the people as it was obvious to the sense, rather than to perfection in the theories on which it was believed to be founded. He believed that no material or abrupt deviation in the established constitution, or in the mode of governing a community, could take place without danger; and the event of the first great political struggle in which he was engaged, evinced the accuracy of this opinion. His constant admonition to England respecting America was—" Talk not of your abstract rights of government; I hate the very sound of them; follow experience and common sense; desist from the innovation you are now attempting; do as you have always done before, in permitting her to tax herself; and in all ordinary circumstances of the world the effects will be the same—namely, peace, security, and attachment." *

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* An eminent American, talking not long ago to an acquaintance of Mr. Burke, said, " Had the advice of your illustrious

This minute attention to the uses and habits which unite governors and governed, and of which the veneration he expressed for the component parts of our constitution, formed a natural part, although represented by the party to whom he stood opposed in 1791 as the effects of a narrow and fettered system which he had formed for himself, will by others be deemed the strongest proof of enlarged wisdom. The natural frame of his politics indeed was of the most expanded cast. He always contended for a liberal and conciliatory line of conduct in national questions, a disregard of small and temporary benefits for the sake of great and permanent interests; seeming to think that England had lost, and might again be a loser by selfishness, but never had sustained injury by her kindness and generosity. For this reason he would not run the risk of losing the American Continent for the sake of a revenue, which even, if acquired, he early perceived could be no more than nominal. In the same spirit, he called for concession to the Irish legislature,—to her oppressed and restricted commerce—and to her vast body of roman catholic subjects from the disabilities under which they la-

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friend been followed at the beginning of our contest, I do not positively say that America at this day would have been yours, though in very wise hands, and with concessions to her trade and advancing knowledge, even this might have been possible. But I am very sure that our separation would have been more easy, more imperceptible, more good-humoured; and possibly we might have been afterwards linked together by mutual interests as strongly as by dominion. Burke would have saved your country much bloodshed, above one hundred millions of money, and, more than that, have prevented a hostile feeling between the nations which may now never be allayed."

boured; for justice and future security to the people of India; for liberty of conscience to the dissenters; for the relief of small debtors; for the suppression of general warrants; for the abolition of negro slavery, as a trade, and for the better treatment of those who were in the islands; for the extension of the power of juries; for the liberty of publishing the Parliamentary debates; for the re-establishment of Mr. Wilkes in his seat for Middlesex; for the enactment of Mr. Grenville's most useful bill, regulating controverted elections, which met with much unaccountable opposition, and found in Mr. Burke one of its ablest supporters; for the Nullum Tempus Act, securing the property of the subject against dormant claims of the crown; for another which he endeavoured to carry against similar claims of the church; for retrenching the public expenditure without parsimony toward public servants and services, or infringing upon the dignity of the crown; for a more unrestrained system of commercial intercourse; for a more generous policy towards France and the French princes in the earlier part of the war than Mr. Pitt was inclined to show; and in innumerable other instances on record; all indicating love to popular interests, and to the most enlarged and liberal views. In most of these questions his understanding may be said to have assumed the post of honour,—that is, it did not follow, but rather led the public voice. He had, in fact, an unfeigned contempt for statesmen without "large, liberal, and prospective views," for what he called "mechanical politicians," and "pedlar principles." "Littleness in object and in means," said he, seeming to hint at some of the Ministry, or their connexions, in 1796, "to them appears soundness and sobriety. They think there is nothing worth pursuit but that which they can handle: which they can measure with a two-foot rule; which they can tell upon ten fingers."

As it has been frequently maintained that he ultimately swerved from those principles of freedom with which he set out in political life, a re-perusal of his earlier writings, and a fair induction from his general arguments, will convince us that at no period did he assume the character of what is called a flaming patriot, having on the contrary early declared in the House of Commons "that being warned by the ill effects of a contrary procedure in great examples," (he had the Earl of Bath, and some others in his eye, at the moment) "he had taken his ideas of liberty very low; in order that they should stick to him, and that he might stick to them, to the end of his life."—Averse, therefore, from professions of patriotism, few statesmen paid more attention to the substance; and in pursuing what he thought the true interests of the country, never very eagerly sought, and perhaps never much valued, popular applause; especially if to obtain it required the sacrifice of a single principle, or a point of sound wisdom. He did not seem so much openly to despise, as tacitly to consider present popularity as a species of approbation which does not always, nor even generally, extend its influence to the page of history, where alone the deserts of a great man are justly balanced, and receive their due reward. In the eyes of many he was, so far as his personal interests were concerned, over-tenacious in never surrendering his own to the popular opinion.

The same enlightened patriotism, superior to all party considerations, which proffered support to government during the riots in 1780, "when (as he says) wild and savage insurrection quitted the woods and prowled about our streets in the name of reform," brought him forward with irresistible power in the still more fearful crisis produced by the great convulsion in a neighbouring country. There was at all times a gallant spirit, a kind of old-fashioned generosity about the opinions and character, both public and private, of Burke, which, whenever he saw one branch of the constitution, or any one order of the community, pressed down or threatened by the others, made him fling himself into the lighter scale, to restore, if possible, the equipoise. Such was his conduct on this most important of all occasions. He thought it his duty to stand in the breach, even if alone; to reason, and if necessary, to contend with his former political companions who seemed to be misled beyond the line of prudence by the enthusiasm of the moment; to appeal from hilip Pdrunk to Philip sober; to pronounce aloud the warning voice to the people at large should they labour under the same delusion;—to point out the mischiefs which, not their neutrality merely, but their good sense and decided hostility were required to prevent. The results of these endeavours, were a violent clamour against him for assaulting the cause of liberty. What species of liberty it was which he is said to have assaulted, is never ventured to be explained, but it is necessary that the reader should know it was that of France in 1793. What the liberty was which he defended and approved is more obvious, for he has told us pretty explicitly—that it was English liberty—it was that system of things which secured to every order in the state, to the monarchy, to the aristocracy, and to the people, and to every person within those orders, the full enjoyment of as many rights, as full security, and as much freedom of action, as was consistent with the same rights, the same security, and the same freedom of action, to every other order and individual.

For reprobating the former, and supporting the latter system, he was accused of inconsistency, as if between the practice of France and the practice of England there prevailed the slightest affinity—wide as vice and virtue, as wrong and right asunder. The distinction which he drew between them, and the election which he made of the latter, required no efforts of subtlety, but were the ordinary results of sound sense and a clear understanding. Attached to the monarchy from principle and from conviction, and brought forward in life by the aristocracy, he professed for both a warm, though not a "slavish respect," and in the moment of need did them service which never can be repaid, and which ought never to be forgotten. As one sprang from the middle rank of the people, he wished to preserve that rank also as well as the others, respectable, unawed by the tyranny (as in France) of the mob. Sincere in the veneration of religion, he contemplated the spoliation of its institutions first, and subsequent extinction as a principle of belief in that country, with horror. Exemplary in the performance of his social and moral duties, he could not see them involved in the general ruin of every thing decent and valuable, without the strongest indignation. He was arrived too at an age when the judgment, in matters of government, is out of the reach of crude schemes, and more juvenile follies; when the lust of innovation, if it has ever prevailed in the mind, is cooled by the calculations of experience. His practical knowledge of states, and governments, and the conflicting interests and passions of politicians, had been laboriously earned, his observation had been keen, his powers to combine, analyze, and deduce important truths from the contemplation of the whole, great as it appeared, beyond example. Looking at such a man in the abstract, without previously knowing what part he *did* take, no doubt could be entertained of the part he *would* take.

After all, the greatest and most useful of his many gifts was that capacity to point out consequences, which, stretching itself beyond even wisdom, became almost prescience. In this point he stands alone; no other statesman has approached him, or is likely so to do, in the exercise of the same faculty. His predictions, though so numerous and various, and which at first, by their boldness, afforded matter for surprise, became, by their fulfilment to the letter in almost every instance, a subject of general astonishment; though the French Revolution was by no means the first occasion on which this quality was developed. An attentive inquirer will find it marked in most of the great events of his public life.

He lived just long enough to find himself acknowledged the prince of political prophets; to see the reprobation he had ventured to pass on the most remarkable event of modern times more than justified by the horrid scenes to which it had given rise; to confirm the body of the nation in the belief that it had acted wisely, and to convince many of the opposite party that their judgment had been wrong. Had he even erred in estimating the dangers which threatened our own institutions, it would be difficult to blame his caution. A government like that of England, commonly upright in design, in the main pure in practice, and under which the people have become great, free, and prosperous beyond all example, is entitled to our best exertions in moments of peril, notwithstanding the existence of a few trivial defects or errors, which after all, interfere with no fundamental right of the people, and which it is easier to point out than to remedy. The fabric of all constitutions, and perhaps of our own especially, is valuable only when the materials which compose it are in close union; disunited, they are nearly valueless. It was the praise of Mr. Burke to tie them more closely at a moment when the mistakes of some, and the designs of others, threatened to sever them for ever; and by this one merit, which is only one item in a long list of public services, has left a name as imperishable as the country which he saved and adorned.

Let it be supposed on the other hand that his mind had been less happily regulated, that his wisdom or patriotism had been less enlarged, that he had fallen in with the views of the theorists and the mob, in order to render them a stepping-stone to place, or even to the perpetration of criminal schemes; that deluded by a spirit of insane ambition he had led the van, supported by Paine and so many hundreds of other incendiaries and dreamers of no ordinary rank and talents, to batter down the venerable institutions of the land in expectation of rising upon the ruins,—there is perhaps little doubt but he might have accomplished such designs. With all his assistance, the struggle against such persons and principles was arduous. But with his energies exerted on the contrary side, we should now probably have no constitution to find fault with, and no country, not an independent one at least, to claim.

As a minister, for the short time he was in office, he was, as we have seen, punctual, laborious, and disinterested in an unusual degree. His reform bill was the most important measure carried through Parliament during the century, whether we consider the actual saving of money, the regulation of office, or the abolition of places which might have been rendered sources of undue influence, or at any rate of suspicion, in the votes of thirty-six members of the House of Commons—a number almost sufficient of themselves to form a House. That he would have displayed a different spirit if placed in a more leading department of government, there is no reason to believe; his integrity of purpose was never questioned. It is possible he might not have been popular. He showed too much zeal in urging favourite measures; and zeal in the eyes of the million is suspicious. He did not at all times consult expediency. He exhibited occasionally too much candour in disclosing the whole of his views in public propositions of moment, while other persons in power, with less of courage or more of management, thought it more prudent to let them slide into the world, like ill-news, piecemeal. And having never adopted a measure of great consequence, except after intense consideration and the clearest conviction of its being right, he could not perhaps have yielded with a very good grace to public opinion, had it set in ever so strongly in the contrary way.

MR. BURKE, MR. PITT, MR. FOX.

It may be an object of inquiry among those who look minutely to developement of mind, to estimate the relative capacity and powers which these three great statesmen and orators displayed during their career, and the rank which they are likely to hold upon the roll of history. No formal parallel, however, will be attempted to be drawn here; each has his partizans, and each certainly possesses peculiar merits of his own. But as it is not the pre-eminence of one or two faculties, but the general results of various excellence, that forms the criterion by which great men are usually judged and compared by posterity, so as in this view Cicero has been awarded the superiority among the Romans, and perhaps may also excel the first of the Greeks, Mr. Burke is pretty certain to take the same stand among the moderns. At present indeed, political feelings and partialities may tempt many to question this; for he is yet too near our own time. His great competitors have besides left their names as watch-words and rallying points to two great parties in the state, who, influenced by a sense of party honour and consequence, claim the same distinction each for its particular leader. But party feelings, at least towards individuals, seldom outlive the generation they influence. A century, or less, completely dissolves the spell. Men begin then to look around them for some better evidences of desert than the possession of temporary power or popularity furnish.* Fame indeed is a capricious offering; Milton had little or no reputation as a poet while he lived, and for years afterwards; Dryden did not possess more of it than some other writers, his contemporaries, whose names are now sunk in utter obscurity; several men have almost governed our House of Commons during their day, whose claim to such distinction no one now acknowledges; Mirabeau ruled the National Assembly of France, yet what historian will venture to class him among the good, or the truly great? Even Demosthenes and Cicero during their lives only divided public applause with rivals in reputation whom none would now think of placing in comparison; and such it is almost certain will be the fate of Burke.

No man has excelled, or possibly equalled Mr. Pitt in the management of the Cabinet, in a tact for business, in finance, in that uncommon dexterity which adapting itself, though without subserviency, at once to the wishes of the sovereign, and to the fluctuating feelings of the public, never, during so long a period of time, lost the confidence of either. His powers were only exceeded by his prudence.

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* "Even now," says a writer who does not overload him with praise, "while the ashes of Fox and Pitt are yet warm, and their eloquence may be said yet to sound in our ears, how much more are the speeches of Burke read, how much more of them is generally remembered.

In no point of ability could Mr. Fox be deemed inferior, and in bursts of overpowering eloquence was considered often to have the advantage. But more particularly as a popular idol, as one born to lead a formidable party in Parliament, and to extract out of casual political coadjutors devoted and enthusiastic personal friends, he stood alone, and far above all other men. Mr. Burke never did, and Mr. Pitt, had it been his lot to labour during his life in the ungracious work of Opposition, never could have approached to an equality with him in this respect. His only wants, perhaps, were that caution and moderation in which Mr. Pitt excelled.

Mr. Burke, on the other hand, in addition to displaying an equality with them in their most distinguished political characteristics, possessed other and various powers to which they had little pretension; and considering that he had to fight his way in the House of Commons, from comparative obscurity, through vexatious jealousies and difficulties which never thwarted the career of his great competitors, and buoyed up solely by his talents, he may be said to have accomplished much more than they did for fame. A few, and but a few, of his principles of policy have been noticed in this work; the detail belongs to the history of the country, and would require a larger volume than the present to itself. They embraced, during a period of thirty years, the whole of our foreign, colonial, and domestic relations, under every variety of form and situation; his views extremely clear, more enlarged sometimes than those of Mr. Pitt,—more precise and accurate than those of Mr. Fox; and though it is not meant to claim for him infallibility, no statesman who took so decided a part on such a multiplicity of subjects has committed so few mistakes. It would be a hazardous matter to point out any gift or capacity, as a statesman, in which Mr. Burke was deficient; in foresight, the first and most important of all, he confessedly far excelled his great contemporaries, and all his predecessors.

The same superiority belongs to him in most of the natural and acquired powers necessary to constitute a great orator; and this is not merely the verdict of the *critic* in his study, but he actually exhibited a power over his *audience*, sometimes in the House of Commons, and more than once in Westminster Hall, to which they never attained. "For remarkable passages," observes the able historian of the impeachment, "separable from their novelty, or their striking original importance in idea or diction, Mr. Burke is the mighty master. Those of Mr. Fox were not so distinguished."—In the speeches of Mr. Pitt and Mr. Fox there is, beyond all question, a great deal of common place,—much of which very ordinary men would say on similar occasions; but it is difficult to read a page or two of Burke, and not feel a conviction that his speeches belong to another and to a higher order of intellect. The oratory of his competitors was often inferior to his in the extent of information it conveyed, and almost always in new and forcible illustration. It was inferior likewise in not impressing the mind with the same feeling of the enlarged wisdom of the speaker; also in wit and ridicule; in pathos; in imagery; in force of invective, an useful, but sometimes dangerous power; and more than all, it was inferior in that kindling of genius called by the critics the eloquence of passion, and which they deem essentially necessary to great success. In ordinary business his powers were perhaps less conspicuous than in affairs of importance; his speeches on the latter occasions imparted something like the idea of an ocean of mind, at once deep and boundless. He did not latterly engage in, or like, the common routine of opposition, but, as has been said of Shakspeare, he was always great when a great occasion called for it.

If in so many requisites, which go to the formation of a distinguished political character, we find Mr. Burke on a level, or above his great rivals in public life, there are others of no slight moment in which comparison tells to their disadvantage.

As a writer, it is scarcely necessary to advert to his vast superiority. Mr. Pitt, indeed, did not seriously contend for the honours of the press. Mr. Fox composed slowly and with labour, very unlike his mode of speaking, sometimes complaining of the difficulty of the process as almost vexatious. Mr. Burke was rapid in composition, though patient in a much greater degree than is common with men of genius, in careful revision, and, independent of mere literary execution, there are more traces of vigour of thought, and ingenuity and originality of mind in any one of his pamphlets, than in Mr. Fox's history. In the extent of his general knowledge he excelled them both. As a man of general genius (Sir Joshua Reynolds certainly had him in his eye in the definition of that quality), who seemed capable of surpassing in any pursuit to which he chose to devote his attention, he excelled them. As a philosophical critic, the Essay on the Sublime and Beautiful places him far above them; and in that general truth of deduction from experience and from appearances, whether in the moral, natural, or political world, which constitutes the philosopher, his superiority is equally incontestible. In powers of conversation he far excelled them. In a fine and correct taste for the arts he excelled them. In classical learning he was at least on a par with them; and in classical criticism, though Mr. Fox was an excellent critic, he had perhaps the advantage in depth and ingenuity. Even in epistolary communication, which forms the business of some men, and the occasional occupation of all, the same marked superiority over his great rivals, whether in the familiar letter or the more formal exposition of public business, is as obvious as in any other of his talents. Of his pre-eminence over Mr. Fox, with whom he has been more particularly compared in the various excellence constituting a very great man, Dr. Johnson, with characteristic precision, stated his conviction in a single sentence; "Sir," said he, alluding to some political opinions of Sir Joshua Reynolds, "he is too much under the influence of the Fox (dog) *star*, and the Irish *constellation*." Among politicians he will be considered to be what Michael Angelo is among artists.

Viewed in whatever light, he must always be considered a most extraordinary man—extraordinary in his talents, in his acquirements, in his rise, in his progress, and in his end; for the last efforts of his mind rise in power and in brilliancy over almost any of the preceding. He lived in a momentous time, and seemed made for such an occasion by the delight he felt in strong excitements, and the splendour of the exertions to which they gave rise. He may be considered in politics what the great reformers were in religion—possessed of zeal, powers, and perseverance, altogether boundless, to influence at favourable moments, the minds of men from their customary channels of thought to such as he deemed more consistent with truth and public advantage. He was peculiarly fitted for being the great presiding genius of a country, and his great contemporaries should have been his ministers. *He* should have originated measures, and they should have carried them into execution. Public servants, as able as they were, and (if that be any criterion of merit) infinitely more successful, have been often seen in the world, but it has required two thousand years to produce one Cicero and one Burke. Great as his fame is, it is not probably near its height; calculated as he is, in the various characters of statesman, orator, and writer, to descend to a late period of time; to gain in reputation as he recedes from the fleeting animosities and prejudices of the day; and perhaps to excite regret and surprise that we should have had among us the great master-spirit in political prophesying and teaching, and not oftener have profited by his admonitions.

"If we are to praise a man in proportion to his usefulness," says a distinguished German writer, whose volumes are admired throughout Europe, "I am persuaded that no task can be more difficult than that of doing justice to another Englishman, his (Sir W. Jones's) contemporary, the Statesman and Orator Burke. This man has been to his own country and to all Europe—in a very particular manner to Germany—a new light of political wisdom and moral experience. He corrected his age when it was at the height of its revolutionary phrenzy; and without maintaining any system of philosophy he seems to have seen farther into the true nature of society, and to have more clearly comprehended the effect of religion in connecting individual security with national welfare, than any philosopher, or any system of philosophy, of any preceding age."*

"This I deliberately and steadily affirm," writes a learned man more than once quoted, after an animated eulogy on him as a critic and philosopher, "that of all the men who are, or who ever have been, eminent for energy or splendour of eloquence, or for skill and grace in composition, there is not one who, in genius or erudition, in philanthropy or piety, or in any of the qualities of a wise and good man, surpasses Burke."

"If," said Mr. Fox, in opening the first charge of the impeachment, and the allusion to Mr. Burke was rapidly caught by the auditory, "If we are no longer in shameful ignorance of India; if India no longer makes us blush in the eyes of Europe; let us know and feel our OBLIGATIONS to HIM—whose admirable resources of opinion and affection—whose untiring toil, sublime genius, and high-aspiring honour, raised him up conspicuous among the most beneficent worthies of mankind!"

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* Schlegel's Lectures on Literature, vol. ii. p. 278.

"To whom," said Sheridan in his happier moments, before the false lights of French liberty misled him, "I look up with homage, whose genius is commensurate to his philanthropy, whose memory will stretch itself beyond the fleeting objects of any little, partial, temporary shuffling, through the whole range of human knowledge and honourable aspirations after human good, as large as the system which forms life, as lasting as those objects which adorn it;"—"a gentleman whose abilities, happily for the glory of the age in which we live, are not entrusted to the perishable eloquence of the day, but will live to be the admiration of that hour when all of us shall be mute, and most of us forgotten."

ADDENDA.

Vol. I, page 10—*line* 31 *from top.*

Spenser thus alludes to Sir Walter Raleigh's visits to him when resident at Kilcolman Castle—

> "There a strange shepherd chanc'd to find me out,
> Whether allured by my pipe's delight,
> Whose pleasing sound yskilled far about,
> Or thither led by chance, I know not right;
> Whom when I asked from what place he came,
> And how he hight, himself he did ycleep,
> 'The shepherd of the ocean by name,'
> And said he came far from the main sea deep."

Vol. I, page 52—begin the page.

It was about this time that Mr. Burke accidentally formed an acquaintance in St. James's Park, with a very enterprising and original character, who, though a native of the East, nearly friendless in England, and who, consequently, appeared in rather a "questionable shape," presented evidences of a mind so much above his situation, that he instantly, to the best of his power, befriended him. This man, with a little more of the favour of fortune, might have turned out one of the most conspicuous, as he was one of the most adventurous, spirits of modern times. Sir W. Jones thus writes of him, (May, 1786) to Sir John Macpherson, when Governor General of India:

"I have already thanked you for your attentions to Emin, and I beg to repeat them; many in England will be equally thankful. He is a fine fellow; and if active service should be required, he would seek nothing so much as to be placed in the most perilous edge of the battle."—Lord Teignmouth, in his Memoirs of Sir W. Jones, gives an abstract of his career:

"Few persons have passed through a greater variety of hardships and perilous adventures than the person mentioned by Sir W. Jones, under the name of Emin. Born at Hamadan, in Persia, of Armenian parents, and exposed during his infancy to uncommon disasters, while a mere youth he followed his father and ruined family to Calcutta. He had there an opportunity of observing the superiority of Europeans in arms, arts, and sciences, over the Asiatics; and the impression which he received from it inspired an invincible desire in Emin to acquire the knowledge which they possessed. For this purpose he determined at all hazards to visit England; and after a long opposition from his father, having obtained his reluctant assent, he adopted the only means left for the accomplishment of his purpose, by working his passage as a common sailor in one of the ships belonging to the East India Company. After his arrival in England, he lost no time in beginning to acquire the instruction which he so anxiously desired, but his progress was retarded by the narrowness of his circumstances, and he was compelled to submit to menial occupations and laborious employments, to procure a subsistence. Fortune favoured his perseverance, and in a moment of despair he was accidentally introduced to the notice of the Duke of Northumberland, and afterwards to that of many gentlemen of rank and fortune, by whose assistance his views were promoted.

"The great object of Emin was to obtain a knowledge of military tactics, in the hopes of employing it successfully in rescuing the liberty and religion of the country of his ancestors from the despotism of the Turks and Persians. After serving with the Prussian and English armies in Germany, he procured the means of transporting himself into the mountains of Armenia, in the view of offering his services to Heraclius, the reigning Prince of Georgia, and of rousing the religious zeal and martial spirit of his countrymen. He had there the mortification to find his resources inadequate to the magnitude of the enterprize, and he was compelled to return disappointed to England. After some time spent in solicitation, he was enabled, by the assistance of his patrons, to proceed with recommendations to Russia, and thence, after various fatigues and impediments, which his fortitude and perseverance surmounted, he reached Teflis, the capital of Georgia. After eight years of wanderings, perils, and distresses, through the mountains of that country and Armenia, he was obliged to abandon his visionary project, and returned to his father in Calcutta. Still anxious for the accomplishment of his plans, and no ways intimidated by past dangers and difficulties, he made a third attempt for the execution of them, and proceeded to Persia. This proved equally unsuccessful, and he again returned to Calcutta.

"In Emin we see the same man who was a sailor, a porter, a menial servant, and subsisting by charity—the companion of nobles, and patronized by princes and monarchs; ever preserving, in his deepest distresses, a sense of honour, a spirit of integrity, a reliance upon Providence, and a firm adherence to the principles of Christianity, in which he had been educated. During his residence in Calcutta he published an account of his eventful life, which Sir William Jones condescended to revise, so far only as to correct orthographical errors, but without any amendment of the style."

Previous to his introduction to the Duke of Northumberland, Emin had become acquainted with Edmund Burke, whom, as already stated, he accidentally met in the Park. After some conversation, Mr. Burke invited Emin to his apartments at the sign of Pope's Head, a bookseller's, near the Temple. Emin, ignorant of the name of the gentleman who had treated him with so much courtesy, begged to be favoured with it; and Mr. Burke politely answered, "Sir, my name is Edmund Burke, at your service; I am a runaway son from a father, as you are." He then presented half-a-guinea to Emin, saying, "Upon my honour, this is what I have at present—please to accept of it."

Mr. Burke next day visited Emin, and assisted him with his advice as to the books which he should read. He introduced him to his relation Mr. William Burke; and for thirty years Emin acknowledges that he was treated with unceasing kindness by both.

At the period of the commencement of his acquaintance with Mr. Burke, Emin had little left for his maintenance, and the prospect of accomplishing the purpose of his voyage to England became daily more gloomy. "Had not Mr. Burke consoled him now and then," to use the words of Emin, he might have been lost for ever through despair; but his friend always advised him to put his trust in God, and he never missed a day without seeing Emin. He was writing books at the time, and desired the author (i. e. Emin) to copy them: the first was an imitation of the late Lord Bolingbroke's Letter; the second, the "Treatise of Sublime and Beautiful."—The whole of this story is characteristic in a high degree of the humanity and generosity which always distinguished this great and virtuous ornament of our nation.

To an application from Emin many years subsequent to this period, to procure for him some situation of profit in India, Mr. Burke wrote the following reply:—

"TO YUSEPH EMIN, CALCUTTA

"MY DEAR OLD FRIEND EMIN,

"You reproach me but too justly for not having regularly answered your letters, but I assure you that neither my wife nor I have forgot you; nor has my son been left unacquainted with our regard and good wishes to you; so that he begs leave to be ranked among your old friends, though you could only know him in his infancy.

"I have never had much interest in India. Lord Clive once thought himself obliged to me for having done what I thought an act of justice towards him. The only use I made of his inclination towards me, was to get him to recommend you to some military promotion. This was in the year 1772. I am convinced he did write, but I believe he was far from well with the people then in power. Since that time none of those who governed India, either abroad or at home, have been my particular friends. Some, perhaps, have been ill-disposed towards me. My parliamentary occupation with regard to India was naturally not very pleasing to those, the faults of whose government it fell to my lot to reprehend. My friends have suffered; I have not gained. I shall, however, be well paid for a great deal of trouble if I can make the burden of the English government over the people of India a little more tolerable than it has been.

"As to you, my friend, you have been tossed in many storms, and in many parts of the world. It is fit that your declining years should have some rest. I am glad you have sought it in the comforts of a good conscience, and the domestic satisfactions of a good father of a family;—every thing else is but show without substance.

"There are many changes here of all kinds since you left us. The Duke of Northumberland, your friend, is dead. Mrs. Montague is still alive, and when I see her I shall put her in mind of you. Many changes, too, of a much more striking nature have happened since you and I first became acquainted. Who could have thought the day I first saw you in St. James's Park, that this kingdom would rule the greater part of India? But kingdoms rise and pass away—Emperors are captive and blinded—Pedlars become Emperors. We are alive, however, and have, I hope, sense enough to derive lessons of private consolation from great events. They do not always teach the great, for whom they seem to be made; somebody ought to profit of them. You have attempted great things on noble principles. You have failed, and you are better off for yourself than if you had succeeded; for you are an honest, and if you please, a happy private man. Believe me, if occasion offers, I shall not forget you. My son and Mrs. Burke desire their kindest remembrance; and pray believe me to be, with great esteem and affection, my worthy old friend,

"Your most faithful and
"Obedient humble servant,
"March 29, 1789. "EDMUND BURKE."

Vol. I, page 163—*line* 23 *from top.*

It seems that part of the property which he inherited in Ireland had been litigated by some of his relations with his elder brother. To this there is allusion in the following letter, and the sentiments contained in it furnish further proof of the excellence of his heart—

"MY DEAR SIR,

"The present unhappy state of public affairs has required my daily and almost hourly attendance in the House of Commons. I have, therefore, not had a single moment's time to answer your letter of the 15th November from the county of Kerry, and which enclosed one from Mr. John Henessy to you, until this day. I am equally surprised and shocked at the picture that gentleman has drawn of what he supposes the effects of my conduct. He indeed obligingly attributes it to my ignorance of the true state of the rights and sufferings of the claimants. But if that ignorance had arisen from any neglects imputable to me, the fault would have been nearly the same as if I had been unjust and inhuman with the clearest knowledge of the case.

"I am sorry that I am obliged to remind you of the circumstances of a matter, of which you must yourself be at least as well-informed as I am. I will now, in a few words, lay them before you.

"In the year 1765, my brother died; and among other things bequeathed to me his interest in Clohir, which is the subject of yours and Mr. Henessy's letter. I understood, that during my brother's life-time, whilst the transaction was recent, and all the parties and witnesses living, the affair was litigated; that the litigation had proved unsuccessful; and that a decree of a court of equity had established him in peaceable possession.

"I suppose that nobody will think me unjust in supposing that I had a fair title to what was so left, and so confirmed. In this light things appeared to me, and I believe facts so stood, when, about a year after the death of my brother, I was for two or three weeks in your country; that is, about eleven years ago, in the autumn of the year 1766.

"It only remains for me to account for what has happened since. Not having been able to visit Ireland in all that long space of time, nor, consequently, to look after the rights of others, or even of myself; I did what I thought most effectual towards remedying the ill consequences of my ignorance with regard to the one or to the other. I placed that affair, together with all the rest of my little concerns in Ireland, of whatsoever nature, in the hands of my friend, the late Counsellor Ridge, implicitly resigning myself to his direction, and referring wholly to him every application that should be made to me in relation to any Irish business. His great integrity, and his sound knowledge in his profession, gave me all the reason in the world to be persuaded, that he never would advise me to the assertion of any right which I could not support in law, and which in honour and conscience was not justifiable. From that time to this I have met with no disturbance. I am persuaded, no better method could be found out to prevent any ill effects which might happen from my long absence, and consequent ignorance of my affairs. I most certainly never desired, or remotely wished him, to controvert for a moment the just rights of any man living. I think I should not have done so for interests of the greatest magnitude in the world, much less for one, which though in my circumstances not to be neglected by me, is as nothing in comparison of those which I slight every day of my life, in favour of what I think fair and honest. Indeed, it is little worthy of any injustice either to obtain or hold.

"So far as to my just presumption in favour of my legal right. But I must say, that I should think it a very poor account of my conduct, if satisfied with having such a right, I had reason to think there had been any original wrong in the obtaining it, though not by my act or consent. But your father, a man, I believe, of as perfect integrity as ever lived, is my authority for the fairness of the original transaction. I apprehend it is misstated in the case which you have transmitted to me. For he expressly told me, that it was carried on, not only with the clearest light into its true nature, but at the earnest entreaty of the parties; my brother, who was in his disposition timid and cautious, having for a long time declined to meddle with it. The narrative says, that on some doubtful intentions of my deceased brother, and on having received an unsatisfactory answer, Mr. Robert Nagle immediately went to Dublin, and equipped himself with a new religion, in order to entitle himself as a protestant discoverer, to bring his bill for vesting in him this whole interest.* Whether he would not have acted more honestly, and, in the event, more prudently, in endeavouring by some means to enforce the agreement he had made, if the performance, as he says, had been evaded, is more than I can say, unacquainted as I am with the intricacies of those unhappy laws † on which this business turns. Most certainly, those who have adhered to that agreement have no reason to complain of their condition. But by thus endeavouring to set aside his own act, and to get the whole interest into his own hands, to which, if his original title had been valid in law, he would only have been entitled to a part, he did all that he could do for the ruin of his family. His distress, whatever it may be, is of his own making. I could not admit his claim, made as he made it, without affecting my brother's memory, and without bringing to beggary the mother of this unhappy man, his brother, and a very large family of children, his and your nearest relations. Your father, I think yourself—I am sure, Garret Nagle, all told me that this would be the infallible event of his success in his suit.

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* One of the barbarous enactments of the penal laws against the Roman Catholics of Ireland, by which one member of a family of that persuasion, by becoming a protestant, could deprive his elder brothers of their property and birthright.

† The penal laws alluded to above.

"As to his mother, whose situation Mr. Henessy paints in such strong colours, I thought I had, in some measure, relieved, instead of causing it. I saw her when I was in Ireland. I then gave something, I forget what, for her relief, and directed in general terms that she should have such helps to put her at her ease as she asked. If she had asked for more than she has done, she should have assuredly had it; for, I trust, I am not altogether grudging, or penurious, on such occasions. This I know, that she seemed perfectly satisfied; whereas, I understood from herself, that she had considered her son's success, and her being turned out of her own little tenement, as one and the same thing. As to Garret Nagle, he knows whether I have been a sharp or oppressive landlord to him, either as to the term of his lease, or to any other particular. There are some others who hold leases under my title, on what I conceive to be very moderate terms. If you, or any judicious person, had told me they were otherwise, I should instantly have thought it my duty to make an abatement. These people are all dependent, perhaps, for their existence, on my right. The question, therefore, in point of humanity (to which Mr. H. appeals) was, whether I ought to suffer Mr. R. Nagle to continue in a distress brought on by his own act, or by admitting his new claims, rejected by a court of law, to subvert and ruin several innocent families, who are, or ought to be, in a thriving condition under me. I did, in general, know that he was in bad circumstances; and though he has not been wholly without relief, I was informed that as he daily threatened new bills, it would be dangerous to give it to him on the terms on which I heard he proposed it from time to time to Mr. Ridge, that is to say, as a sort of composition for his demand. I believe I was recommended to be the more cautious on that head, as I believe he knew me naturally disposed to every possible act of kindness to any of your name, or connected with you by any sort of affinity. Had it been recommended to me by any of you, I should certainly have done all I could to accommodate him in any way. However, until the hour of your letter, I never received, directly or indirectly, from any of them, or any one else, any sort of proposal for eleven years. I now understand what you and the friends of that family wish, though I am surprised that Mr. Kiernan, to whom I must leave in a great measure every thing of this kind, was not communicated with. If, by letting the lease you mention, and giving the hundred pounds you mention, that family can be set to rights, I shall be, just as I always have been, willing, voluntarily and cheerfully to do it, provided it may be done with perfect safety to the derivative interests of all kinds, even to the smallest; for I do not know with what conscience I can consent to sacrifice them, unless I am actually driven to it by the utmost process of law. It is, in truth, rather for them than myself that I have ever been willing to trouble myself much about this affair.

"When I speak of the lease, I mean a lease for twenty-one years; for as the rest of the term is desired as a sort of compensation for what they have lost, I am not willing that such a charge should stand against me. If they lost any advantage, they lost it by no fault of mine; and I am not answerable for not complying with proposals which I never received, and never refused. It is this, and not the difference of the term (which, on calculation, is not very much), that makes me not so willing to comply with the proposal for thirty-one years. In other respects, I must leave the affair to be settled between you and Mr. Hennessy and Mr. Kiernan, to whose joint opinion (if you can come to it) I shall leave the matter. I must expect to be kept out of future litigations; and I wish on that head, when you have adjusted the measures, that Mr. O'Neal should be consulted. He has been kind enough to offer me his assistance in my general affairs.

"I have been several times broke in upon by business, and interrupted in this letter. I have only to add, that if the powerful friends of these people, whom you mention, are as willing to accommodate them as I am, and will give to that the money they proposed in their favour to expend in a contest with me; they will put them much more readily, and much better, at their ease, and show themselves much more their friends. Indeed, I have been ill able to attend to this, or any private business. I am much fatigued, and cannot yet attend myself to any thing but my immediate duty. Let this be my excuse (it is a true one) for doing nothing as yet in the affair you recommended to me in a former letter. Love to all friends. I am ever,

"My dear Sir,
"Most sincerely yours,
"EDMUND BURKE."

"Westminster,
Dec. 9th, 1777.

Vol. I, page 412—*line* 12.

The following letter to his cousin Mr. Nagle, gives us, among other matters, another, and not much less unfavourable portrait of Lord Shelburne, though drawn at an earlier period.

"MY DEAR GARRET,

"I do most heartily wish myself with you. I should wish it even if I were not put in mind, by this burning weather, of the breezy mountains, shady woods, and refreshing waters of Killarney. We have got a summer at last, and it is paying off its arrears of heat, with compound interest; indeed, I long sincerely to see you; and if I were not held by various ties, and engaged in various occupations (though neither very pleasant nor important); and if I were as rich, as, I thank God, I am still healthy and active, I should this summer pay you a visit in your wood-house, that is to say, if you would deign to receive so humble a person, after all your great and titled guests. If I see Lord Kenmare, I shall certainly thank him for his civilities to you. I certainly am as much pleased with them, as if they were offered to myself, and, indeed, a little more. My acquaintance with Lord Winchelsea is very slight; but I have known Lord Pembroke, pretty intimately, for some time. We may meet this summer, and we shall talk you over. I wish you had named me to him.

"What you say of Lord Shelburne is more important. I very well remember your application to me some time ago; I remember too, that I mentioned it to Colonel Barre. Nothing further came of it; I believe that agency was not vacant when you wrote. Between ourselves, and I would not have it go farther, there are, I believe, few who can do less with Lord Shelburne than myself. *He had formerly, at several times, professed much friendship to me; but whenever I came to try the ground, let the matter have been never so trifling, I always found it to fail under me.* It is, indeed, long since he has made even professions. With many eminent qualities, he has some singularities in his character. He is suspicious and whimsical; and, perhaps, if I stood better with him than I do, perhaps my recommendation would not have the greatest weight in the world. This, I mention, as between ourselves. In the mean time, if an opportunity occurs, I shall do the best I can for you. I hope I am not inattentive to my friends to the best of my power; and let me assure you that I have ever looked upon you as a friend, whose ease and welfare I have at heart as much as the interest of any person whatsoever."

Vol. II, page 182—*line* 17.

"RECOLLECTIONS OF THE RIGHT HON. EDMUND BURKE.

"It has been already noticed that the letter of Mr. Burke to Mr. Smith,* in which the publications of Thomas Paine are animadverted upon, with such strength and justice, was received at Spa. It was written while the "Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs" was at press. On the return of Mr. Smith, then a very young man, from the continent, a few months afterward, he made his first visit to Butler's Court, and was, for the first time, introduced to the personal acquaintance of its distinguished owner.

"There was company in the house at the time, and when he arrived from town they had already sat down to dinner. He entered the dining-room, in some measure unobserved, but found a seat at the foot of the table beside Mr. Richard Burke the younger, whose premature death, in no very long time after, plunged his father into such deep affliction; and between whom and Mr. Smith nearer advances to intimacy were made during the evening than the short period of their acquaintance might give room to expect. This would seem to disprove an assertion sometimes made by persons who saw him but little, or whom he might not possibly like, that his habits to a stranger were so reserved as to present an obstacle to intimacy.

"The guests present were rather numerous. Among them were M. Cazales, a distinguished member of the first National Assembly of France, and, unless the writer's memory deceives him, a Vicomte, previous to the abolition of titles; and M. Dillon, reputed a favourite of the unfortunate Marie Antoinette of France, and commonly known by the appellation 'Le Beau Dillon.' These, at least the former more particularly, appeared to speak, or even to understand English very imperfectly. Mr. Burke, consequently, addressed much of his conversation to them in French; he did not seem to pronounce it or speak it well, but was perfectly able to express himself intelligibly, and with reasonable fluency; and this was manifestly all that he aimed at. He appeared not merely above the vanity of attempting to make a display of proficiency; but also above the more excusable feeling of reluctance to betray his want of it. The revolutionary events which were then crowding upon the scene, seemed very much to engross him, and naturally formed a considerable portion of his conversation.

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* Now the Hon. Sir William Cusack Smith, Bart. FRS. Second Baron of the Court of Exchequer in Ireland.

"During dinner, a servant whispered to him the arrival of Mr. Smith, on which he rose from the head of the table where he had been sitting, walked down to the latter, shook hands with and welcomed him, and then returned to his seat. In the manner in which this was done, there appeared to the writer of these recollections, a mixture of something resembling formality, (or should it be called *vieille-cour* stateliness?) with hospitable feeling and frank good nature, of which he would not find it easy to convey a just idea to the reader.

"When the ladies appeared about to quit the room, Mr. Burke stopped them, and went out himself. On his return, in a minute or two, they retired. He had in the mean time, it appeared, been examining the degree of heat of their drawing-room, where thermometers were placed for the purpose of ascertaining the temperature with precision. Mrs. Burke was then in a delicate state of health, labouring, as the writer apprehends, under a complaint of the rheumatic kind; and this was the cause of the affectionate and attentive precaution observed by her husband.

"Richard Burke, the brother of Edmund, and Recorder of Bristol, formed one of the company, and appeared to be a person of pleasantry, humour, and ready wit. The younger Richard, who, however, was not in very good health, seemed, if not diffident or reserved, at least disinclined to take part in the general conversation, and rather disposed to confine his communications to those more immediately about him, and to deliver his sentiments in an under tone of voice. The share of his conversation which he gave to Mr. Smith was considerable; and in its purport as well as quality, extremely gratifying to the latter. His health appeared delicate; a cold, to all appearance, had taken fast hold of him, and fixed upon his chest. Both his father and mother betrayed anxiety on this subject, and might be said to have spoken *at* him, with reference to his declared intention of going next day to London. The weather, his cough, the little inconvenience which would arise from postponing for a few days his interview with Mr. Pitt, were in turn adverted to. He appeared to the writer to cut these parental anxieties and recommendations too short, by the at once careless and peremptory way in which he said 'I shall go, however;' and in some time after, he suggested to one of the ladies the necessity of her having her commissions for town ready that night, as he purposed to start early in the morning.

"In the course of the evening, after the gentlemen had adjourned to the drawing-room, M. Cazales made, in his attempts to express himself in English, more and greater blunders than the writer could have expected. Some of these mistakes he conceives himself to recollect; but as they would be more *vrais* than *vraisemblables,* he thinks it as well not to record them. He seemed to have a desire to amuse and to excite laughter, and he succeeded.* Mr.

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* M. Cazales, who was a good-humoured man, with all the inclination to please and to be pleased, which is often characteristic of his country, had picked up the air, and some of the words of the strange and not very intelligible or elegant old song called "*Peas upon a trencher!*" The words seemed to tickle his imagination, but not knowing them perfectly, he asked Mr. Smith to give them to him accurately. This that gentleman was unable to do, but, to the credit of his promptitude and inge-

Burke contributed an occasional smile to the general merriment, and nothing more; and even this was accompanied by a curl of the lip, that appeared to doubt whether there were much good taste, whatever there might be of good humour, shewn in the proceeding.

"Mr. Smith remained for a few days at the house of this eminent man, and repeated his visit more than once afterwards. So great a portion of time, however, has since elapsed, that he has doubtless forgotten much which deserved to be remembered, and all of which he would desire to remember, could those bright, but flitting thoughts and sentiments, which make up the charm of conversation with a great genius, be always held fast by the memory, or transfixed at once to paper. Some of the particular occasions also, on which a part of what he still retains may have occurred, are, in part, forgotten.

"During one of these visits, a morning was devoted by Mr. Burke to walking round the grounds and vicinity with his visitor, discoursing with him upon agricultural subjects, evincing not only much apparent interest in, but, as is well known to his friends, displaying much practical knowledge of such matters. He talked likewise of Ireland, and seemed to think of it, and to recal the scenes of his early life with some tenderness of feeling. He pointed out the mansion which had belonged to the family of Penn; and either shewed a house traditionally represented as having been inhabited by the poet Waller, or pointed at the church as containing his remains.*

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nuity, wrote the following hasty paraphrase, or version, with a pencil on the back of a letter, both supplied by his amusing French friend: they answer the air very well—

"Garçon apportez moi, moi,
Des pois, de petits pois, pois;
Sucrés Monsieur?—C'est mieux, je crois;
Et l'assiette de bois, bois." Editor.

* Waller's house still exists in the neighbourhood.

"On the profession of the law, which Mr. Smith contemplated, Mr. Burke made a variety of observations. So far, he said, as his experience led to the forming of an opinion, he considered it as not calculated to develope the general, or higher powers of the mind,—an idea which he has likewise thrown out in the speech on American taxation, when sketching the character of Mr. George Grenville. He sought to illustrate this view of the matter by some instances which it might be invidious, and does not seem necessary, to record.

"At the same time he did not seem wholly wedded to his theory;—said that very possibly it was an erroneous one; that even were it correct, there were several splendid exceptions to the rule, and that even in cases to which the rule applied, the pursuits and studies of the bar might sharpen the understanding on many points, and did, in fact, render its professors, as far as they permitted their faculties to expand, acute and penetrating. It assisted likewise to give some degree of logical precision to the mode of thinking; but the general effect after all was to reduce the mind from a wholesale to a retail dealer, in subordinate and petty topicks of information. He added, that he understood the members of the Irish bar to be inferior in legal learning to their English brethren, but in other respects to possess some advantages. It is apprehended that a material change in this respect has since taken place; that the Irish bar may now compete with that of England in legal information; and that on the other hand, the former can no longer lay claim to superiority over the latter, on other grounds.

"It appeared to Mr. Smith, that there was nothing arrogant, peremptory, or dogmatical in the way in which Mr. Burke put forward his opinions, though such charges have been sometimes adduced against his mode of argumentation. Mr. Smith submitted a short tract to his perusal. Mr. Burke objected to the theory which a paragraph in it implied. The former immediately proposed, in deference to such authority, to draw his pen across it, but was stopped by Mr. Burke, who said, 'Do not strike it out until I turn the matter more in my mind.' Next day he made a few changes and interlineations in the manuscript, and said, that thus qualified, the theories of the paragraph might stand. These scenes occurred in the study at Butler's Court.

"Imperfect as these recollections may be deemed, and thrown together as they are, with more haste than the writer could have desired, though prevented by momentary circumstances from devoting more time to their detail and arrangement, they may not be wholly without interest to those who delight in contemplating the great character to whom they relate."

"—— Lamented sage! whose prescient scan,
Pierced through foul anarchy's gigantic plan,
Prompt to incred'lous hearers to disclose
The guilt of France, and Europe's world of woes—
Thou on whose name each distant age shall gaze,
The mighty sea-mark of these troubled days;
Oh! large of soul, of genius unconfin'd,
Born to delight, instruct, improve mankind."

Vol. II, page 207.

Since this work was printed off, a pamphlet has been published by Mr. R. Therry, which contains some letters written by Mr. Burke to his son, who had proceeded again to Ireland, on the business of the Roman Catholics early in September, 1792. They relate, of course, chiefly to their affairs, and evince his characteristic wisdom in the advice he offers, as to the means to be adopted for accomplishing their views. These admonitions differ in no respect from those still urged by the wisest, firmest, and most moderate friends of that body, though its leaders did not then, no more than they do now, follow the friendly recommendations thus given—A few passages from them, as possessing much interest at the present moment, may be quoted:—

"In those letters* I gave you my ideas in general; particularly I pressed what I now press again; that those to whose cause we wish well in Ireland, would leave off the topic, of which some of them are so fond, that of attributing the continuance of their grievances to English interests or dispositions, to which they suppose the welfare of Ireland is sacrificed. I do not know whether they believe me or not; or whether they may not think, that I too speak from that sort of policy: but, believe what they will, there is not one story which the Protestant ascendency tells of them that is more perfectly groundless than that notion. What interest has any individual here, or what interest has the whole kingdom collectively, that the Catholics of Ireland should have no share in the election of members of Parliament? † Since the independency, and even before, the jobs of that government are almost wholly in their own hands; the whole that England, or that Englishmen, get from it is a very trifle, not worth the consideration of any the smallest body of men; and if they think that the court party, or the ministerial party, or any party whatsoever on this side of the water, wish to keep down the Catholics, in order to keep the whole mass of Ireland feeble, they do an injury to the quietness of their character; at the same time infinitely too great an honour to the profundity of their politics. I have never known any of the successive governments, in my time, influenced by any passion relative to Ireland, than the wish that they should hear of it and its concerns as little as possible: for this reason, the present set of ministers, who partake of that disposition in a larger measure than any of their predecessors with whom I have been acquainted, have left the whole to the persons to whom they have abandoned Ireland, and they again to —— that junta of jobbers, who endeavour to secure to themselves lucrative repose against the faction who may oppose them there, or the rivals who may want to succeed them from hence —— our friends are greatly, radically, and to themselves most dangerously mistaken, if they do not know that the whole of what they suffer is from cabals purely Irish."—(*Sept.* 20, 1792.)

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* Two, which had been previously forwarded to his son.

† This right, as has been already stated, was conceded to Roman Catholics in 1793, chiefly through the exertions of Mr. Burke.

"As to your clients, in my opinion, as long as they keep themselves firm to the solid ground of the British constitution; they are safe for the present, and must be successful; but if they have any mistaken theorists to carry them into any thing like the principles adopted in France, they will not only be baffled, but baffled with shame."—(*Oct.* 1, 1792.)

"I am glad to find I coincided in opinion with you. To petition the king is a right, and that word for word, as you conceive it; as to petition parliament in its present temper, would be foolish; this might be declared in some firm, modest, and temperate tone, more in the style of lamentation. What you say of the friendly Protestants is of more importance than all the rest, both, in my opinion, for the credit of their body, as for the advantage of your clients. I long much to talk to you on this subject. But it is more important that you should be where you are, so 'tis possible that the *bar* could be got to declare any thing useful in any tolerable numbers. Your adversaries are very busy every where, and have filled the mind of the people with the idea of a rebellion of the Roman Catholics ready to break out."—(*Oct.* 17, 1792.)

"As to you, my dear Richard, be assured that in private conversations, in an affair of this difficulty and extent, you can do nothing. Reserve and coolness, and unwillingness to begin or continue discourses on the subject, and not too great a quickness to hear, give the enemy a better opinion of your discretion, and make them respect you more. Besides, by leaving them to themselves, they will be less heated with controversy, and disposed to think more dispassionately on the subject.

"Your mind you will open to your confidential friends in the Committee; there it is necessary; and that restraint, which is prudence with enemies, is treachery with friends. What degree of temperate and steady firmness you may find amongst them I know not. But every thing will depend on that combination, that is the combination of perseverance with coolness, and great choice in measures. You cannot too often inculcate to your chief friends, that this affair is of such a nature, that it cannot possibly be the work of a single day, or of a single act. The web has been too long weaving to be unravelled in an instant. No evils, but much good would happen were it so unravelled; but that is hardly to be expected without some event which we cannot produce, and would not produce if we could, such as the American war, and its issue, which brought on ideas of Irish independence, and these again the necessity of conciliating the Catholics. This hastened their relief to the point in which it stands by many years. The petition to the king I hold an essential *preliminary* for any further application to parliament (whether to be sure you must come at last) until the mind of government and the public in both kingdoms is better prepared than it now is."—(*December* 10, 1792.)

"I am sure I do not pretend to know Ireland as well as they; but I think I know England as well as most people, or I have lived long to little purpose. The sentiments of this nation must finally decide the dispute between them and the jobbing ascendancy. If they are not sensible of it, their enemies are; and there is no degree of pains which they do not take to prejudice people here against them. * * * *

"They (the leaders of the Roman Catholics) think that the conduct of the Castle* is the result of directions from hence; and that here they do nothing but plot some mischief against Ireland. Alas! I wish they could be got seriously and with a ruling spirit, to think of it at all. But things move in the reverse order from what they imagine. They think that ministry here instruct the Castle; and that the Castle sets the jobbing ascendancy in motion; whereas it is now wholly, and has ever since I remember, been for the greater part the direct contrary. The junta in Ireland entirely governs the Castle; the Castle, by its representations of the country, governs the ministry here; so that the whole evil has always originated, and does still originate amongst ourselves. I could enter further into this, but if they do not take my word for it, I am sorry for it. Many arguments would only weaken what I take to be an evident truth."—(*Nov.* 2, 1792.)

Vol. II, page 329—*after* 13*th line.*

On the question of the circulating medium as an important branch of political economy, he seems early to have entertained opinions, which are now considered the most sound and stable. In a recent debate, (Feb. 13, 1826) on Country Banks, and the general pecuniary distress experienced throughout the country, they were thus adverted to by the Right Hon. G. Canning:

"There was no period of our history at which there was greater distress or greater difficulty and dismay than in 1793. At that period there was published by Mr. Burke, a gentleman of no ordinary or doubtful authority, a book, every point and sentence of which was questioned at the time, but the truth of which was subsequently most fully established. Mr. Burke, in describing the French revolutionary proceedings, pointed out the mistakes into which they fell with respect to our paper currency, and observed that they seemed to imagine 'that the prosperity of Great Britain grew out of her paper currency, whereas, in point of fact, the paper currency grew out of her prosperity."

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* The official residence in Dublin of the Lord Lieutenant, and consequently the seat of government.

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"It had been his (Mr. Canning's) fortune to hear and to know Mr. Burke—a man, whose eloquence and whose soundness of opinions distinguished him as a member of that House. Unfortunately, however, he had only known him but two years before his death; he received a letter from him when confined at Bath to a sick bed, from which he never arose, on the subject of the stoppage of cash payments by the Bank, in which the concluding sentence was to the following effect:—'Tell Pitt, that if he circulates one pound notes at the same time with guineas, he will never see the guineas again.' This was the observation of that great man, who, in giving utterance to this sentiment, seemed to exercise a spirit of prophecy, which had so very recently been verified."

Vol. II, page 476—*after the* 4*th line.*

A dictum of Mr. Fox has been lately ushered into the world, which, if truely stated, must be considered either as very unsound criticism, or as showing a strong leaning to to his own style of oratory, which was certainly deficient in the point he is made to undervalue. It is represented, that when a speech was praised in his presence, he usually inquired whether it read well? and if answered in the affirmative, replied 'then it was a bad speech.' No satisfactory reason perhaps can be assigned for such a curious, perhaps extravagant, opinion, which, if countenanced by a shadow of truth, in a few instances in our own day, is at variance with the whole experience of the ancient, and much of the greater part of the modern world; for if it were correct, it must follow that the speeches of Demosthenes and Cicero were *bad* speeches; and this will scarcely be maintained. The origin of this critical heterodoxy, if it were ever seriously entertained, was perhaps some slight feeling of jealousy in the mind of the eminent man in question, of the daily increasing celebrity of Burke's speeches, while his own, he might conceive, containing fewer of the same materials for immortality which characterised those of his old friend and master, and when no longer supported by the influence of his personal popularity or party attachments, might either remain stationary, or possibly retrograde in opinion.

Vol. II, page 34—*after the* 8*th line.*

In pointing out the necessity for a revision of the criminal laws of the country, which he urged were wholly disproportioned in the severity of the punishments they directed against trivial offences, he was accustomed to tell a story indicative of the indifference with which these vindictive enactments were frequently permitted to pass through parliament. On an evening, when an important discussion was expected to come on in the House of Commons, he entered the smoking room, which contained many members who were not usually at their posts, and on inquiring of one, who looked particularly disappointed, the cause of his dejection, received for answer —"Have you not heard then? The great debate is put off;—and I left them doing nothing but voting a few capital felonies." The admirers of Mr. Burke will be happy to find, that this subject which was so near to his heart, and the little attention to which was regretted by him still more in private society than in public, has been so ably and successfully taken up by Mr. Peel; a measure that must render his name pre-eminent among the great benefactors of his country.

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